Pastures of Tender Grass

By Charles Jerdan

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PASTURES OF TENDER GRASS

BY THE SAME AUTHOR

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GOSPEL MILK AND HONEY.
Second Edition.

FOR THE LAMBS OF THE FLOCK.
Second Edition.

MESSAGES TO THE CHILDREN.

FOR THE LORD'S TABLE.
Second Edition.

PASTURES OF TENDER GRASS

SIXTY-SIX SHORT SERMONS TO YOUNG PEOPLE

BY THE

REV. CHARLES JERDAN, M.A., LL.B.

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"*He maketh me to lie down in green pastures* [margin, *pastures of tender grass*]."—Ps. xxiii. 2.

"*Lovest thou Me? . . . Feed My lambs.*"—JOHN xxi. 15.

NOTE

THE Author has been indebted to his friend, the Rev. J. P. STRUTHERS, M.A., Greenock, for valuable help in connection with the revision of the proof-sheets of this book.

October 1908.

TO

A. C. J.

CONTENTS

I–VII. SHAKESPEARE'S SEVEN AGES — PAGE

I. THE INFANT

"And the woman took the child, and nursed it."—Ex. ii. 9 1

II. THE SCHOOLBOY

"But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice."—1 Sam. ii. 18, 19 . . 7

III. THE LOVER

"And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."—Gen. xxix. 20 . 13

IV. THE SOLDIER

"Joshua made war a long time with all those kings."—Josh. xi. 18 17

V. THE JUSTICE

"And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged."—1 Kings iii. 28 . 22

VI. THE PANTALOON

"Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age."—Gen. xviii. 11 . . 27

VII. "SANS EVERYTHING"

"And he discerned him not."—Gen. xxvii. 23 . 32

PAGE

VIII. JEHOVAH MY SHEPHERD
"The LORD is my Shepherd."—Ps. xxiii. 1 . 37

IX. JESUS THE CARPENTER
"Is not this the carpenter?"—Mark vi. 3 . 44

X. CLEAN HANDS
"He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."—Job xvii. 9 51

XI. THE SUPREME NAME
"The Name which is above every name."—Phil. ii. 9 (R.V.) 57

XII. THE FIFTH SPARROW
"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?"—Luke xii. 6. 64

XIII. ROPES ABOUT THEIR NECKS
"So they . . . put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel."—1 Kings xx. 32 70

XIV. CHRIST'S WORDS IMMORTAL
"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."—Matt. xxiv. 35 77

XV. WHERE IS THE HOLY CITY?
"The holy city."—Matt. iv. 5 83

XVI. "READY, AYE READY"
"Be ready to every good work."—Tit. iii. 1 . 92

XVII. TRUMPETS—BELLS
"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps."—Num. x. 1, 2 98

XVIII. THE CARCASE AND THE VULTURES PAGE
"Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."—Matt. xxiv. 28 104

XIX. THE DESOLATION OF JERUSALEM
"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate." —Matt. xxiii. 38 110

XX. PRISON LIGHT
"A light shined in the prison."—Acts xii. 7 . 116

XXI. ANGEL HELP
"Then said they, It is his angel."—Acts xii. 15 123

XXII. WANTED, A MAN
"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her."—Jer. v. 1 (R.V.) . . 130

XXIII. THE IMAGE OF GOD
"The Image of the invisible God."—Col. i. 15 136

XXIV. CLEOPATRA'S NEEDLE
"The obelisks of the house of the sun, that is in the land of Egypt."—Jer. xliii. 13 (R.V., and margin) 142

XXV. "WHERE IS THE LAMB?"
"Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"—Gen. xxii. 7 148

XXVI. A NAME TO LIVE
"Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."—Rev. iii. 1 155

XXVII. JEREMIAH AND MARTIN LUTHER
"The LORD hid them."—Jer. xxxvi. 26 . . 161

PAGE

XXVIII. THE BLESSEDNESS OF GIVING

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—Acts xx. 35 168

XXIX. GOD'S CARE OF THE HOMELESS

"And God heard the voice of the lad."—Gen. xxi. 17 175

XXX. THE BASS ROCK

"I John . . . was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."—Rev. i. 9 . 180

XXXI. "MANNERS MAKYTH MAN"

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."—Ps. xxiv. 3–5 186

XXXII. NO ROOM FOR JESUS

"There was no room for them in the inn."—Luke ii. 7 192

XXXIII. ENVY

"Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."—Isa. xi. 13 200

XXXIV. ST. JOHN AND THE ROBBER

"If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins."—1 John ii. 1, 2 207

XXXV. "THIS WAY AND THAT WAY"

"And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand."—Ex. ii. 12 213

PAGE

XXXVI. THE GREAT FIERY DRAGON
"Behold, a great red dragon."—Rev. xii. 3 . 219

XXXVII. SATAN'S ACTIVITIES
"And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."—Job ii. 2 225

XXXVIII. SAINT ROLLOX
"There is . . . one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. ii. 5 231

XXXIX. THE INVISIBLE BIRD
"A bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter."—Eccles. x. 20 239

XL. CALLED TO HIGHER SERVICE
"A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand."—Ps. lxxxiv. 10
"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."—Luke xix. 17 . . . 246

XLI. THE TREVI FOUNTAIN
"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."—Rev. xxi. 6 254

XLII. THE PANTHEON IN ROME
"And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David."—2 Chron. xxxii. 33 261

XLIII. JESUS A STRONG MAN
"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."—Matt. viii. 17 . . . 266

PAGE

XLIV. THE DRUNKARD'S DANGER
"As he that lieth upon the top of a mast."—Prov. xxiii. 34 272

XLV. FINDING ONE'S LIFE
"Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."—Mark viii. 35 277

XLVI. THE MORE GLORIOUS TEMPLE
"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts."—Hag. ii. 9 285

XLVII. PHYLACTERIES
"They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments."—Matt. xxiii. 5 291

XLVIII. "BY LITTLE AND LITTLE"
"By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land."—Ex. xxiii. 30 . . . 299

XLIX. THE CROWN OF THORNS
"And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head."—Matt. xxvii. 29 304

L. HOIST WITH HIS OWN PETARD
"He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate."—Ps. vii. 15, 16 . . 311

LI. LIVINGSTONE'S DEATH AND BURIAL
"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice."—John x. 16 . . 319

PAGE

LII. TETZEL AND HIS DRUM
"Without money, and without price."—Isa. lv. 1 327

LIII. THE TRUE GENTLEMAN
"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."—Tit. iii. 2 334

LIV. THE JEWS' WAILING PLACE
"Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof."—Ps. cii. 14 . 340

LV. JERUSALEM'S GOLDEN GATE
"The gate of the Temple which is called Beautiful."—Acts iii. 2 346

LVI. GOD IS EVERYWHERE
"The Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys."—1 Kings xx. 28 353

LVII. THE HEN AND HER CHICKENS
"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"—Matt. xxiii. 37 . 360

LVIII. THE PERMANENCE OF LOVE
"Love never faileth."—1 Cor. xiii. 8 (R.V.) . 367

LIX. KILLED WITH KINDNESS
"And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."—2 Kings vi. 23 . . 373

LX. "CAVE CANEM"
"Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers."—Phil. iii. 2 (R.V.) . . . 380

PAGE

LXI. Cock-crowing
"And the cock crew."—Mark xiv. 68 . . 387

LXII. Knowing and Known
"I . . . know My sheep, and am known of Mine."—John x. 14 392

LXIII. The Heavenly Rainbow
"And there was a rainbow round about the throne."—Rev. iv. 3 398

LXIV. Hadrian's Address to his Soul
"If a man die, shall he live again?"—Job xiv. 14 408

LXV. "Carried away by the Angels"
"He was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom."—Luke xvi. 22 (R.V.). 415

LXVI. Judgment Books
"And books were opened."—Rev. xx. 12 (R.V.) 421

I—VII

Shakespeare's Seven Ages

I. THE INFANT

"And the woman took the child, and nursed it."—Ex. ii. 9.

ONE of the most famous passages in the writings of the great poet Shakespeare is that in which he compares the world to the stage of a theatre, and the people who live in the world to the performers on the stage—

> "All the world's a stage,
> And all the men and women merely players:
> They have their exits and their entrances;
> And one man in his time plays many parts,
> His acts being Seven Ages."

The Seven Ages, according to the poet, are—(1) the Infant; (2) the Schoolboy; (3) the Lover; (4) the Soldier; (5) the Justice; (6) the Pantaloon; and (7) the very Aged Man, who has nearly done with life, and is "sans everything."

Some time ago I visited Stratford-on-Avon, the

town in Warwickshire where William Shakespeare was born, and I went to see his grave in Holy Trinity Church there. That church is a fine cruciform building, one hundred and ninety-seven feet long, and crowned with a central spire. It contains many beautiful stained-glass windows, and two of these are the gifts of Americans who have made pilgrimages to Stratford. One of the American windows is in the chancel, and quite near to the poet's resting-place. The scenes shown on it are illustrations from Holy Scripture of the Seven Ages of man; and I thought when I saw the window that I would like to tell the young people about it.

I

On the stage of human life there appears—

> "At first, the INFANT,
> Mewling and puking in the nurse's arms."

And, of course, every baby both mewls and pukes —that is, more or less. To "mewl" is to cry as an infant does. To "puke" is—; but I shall not write down the meaning of that old English word: those of my readers who do not know what it means may look it up in the dictionary.

Upon the American Shakespeare window "the Infant" is represented by MOSES, whom we see lying in his little basket of papyrus or bulrushes, in a quiet spot among the tall reeds on the edge of the river. Pharaoh's daughter is looking down

upon the strange floating cradle, and two of her ladies-in-waiting stand behind her. The infant is "mewling," for do we not read in the history in Exodus that "behold, the babe wept"?

This infant's mother, as was natural, had been his nurse; and now, thanks to the kind-heartedness of the princess and the good sense of his sister, the clever little Miriam, he is at once restored to his mother's arms. Jochebed can henceforth cherish her beautiful boy-baby without fear of the displeasure of the king, and she does not have to try to hide him from Pharaoh's officers any more. For Moses is the adopted son of the king's daughter; and as soon as he is weaned he is to go to the royal palace, and grow up there as a member of Pharaoh's family.

II

This, then, is the first scene in the strange drama of human life: the infant "mewling"—not able to speak, which is the meaning of the word *infant*, —"and with no language but a cry." An infant needs a nurse, for it is weak and tender. A young child is the weakest of all creatures, and the most helpless. It will be a year yet, or perhaps more, before the baby-boy can walk or speak. And at present his little mind is as feeble as his body.

By and by, however, he will grow out of his infancy. He will become self-conscious. At first,

as the poet Tennyson says, he never thinks that "this is I."

> "But as he grows he gathers much,
> And learns the use of 'I' and 'me,'
> And finds 'I am not what I see,
> And other than the things I touch.'"

And the little crying child shall live for ever.

But how interesting the baby is! how wonderful! how sweet! how precious! The new-born child is "a little stranger" who has come from far, from the presence and the hand of God Himself. Those are beautiful verses which Matthias Barr wrote about him—

> "Only a baby small,
> Dropt from the skies;
> Only a laughing face,
> Two sunny eyes;
> Only two cherry lips,
> One chubby nose;
> Only two little hands,
> Ten little toes.
>
> Only a golden head,
> Curly and soft;
> Only a tongue that wags
> Loudly and oft;
> Only a little brain
> Empty of thought;
> Only a little heart
> Troubled with nought.
>
> Only a tender flower
> Sent us to rear;
> Only a life to love
> While we are here;
> Only a baby small,
> Never at rest;
> Small, but how dear to us
> God knoweth best."

It is strange to reflect that every one of the strongest and greatest men who have lived was, to begin with, an infant. And it is still stranger to remember that the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour, was once an unconscious babe "in the nurse's arms." The boys and girls have all seen pictures of the "Madonna and Child." We know, too, how much the Man Christ Jesus loves the children, and how constantly He cares for them, and how "out of the mouth of babes and sucklings He has perfected praise." And we cannot forget His own wonderful and gracious words: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven."

The poet Wordsworth has said that "Heaven lies about us in our infancy"; and the same thought is expressed in George MacDonald's lovely lines entitled *Baby*—

"Where did you come from, baby dear?—
'Out of the everywhere into here.'

Where did you get those eyes so blue?—
'Out of the sky as I came through.'

What makes the light in them sparkle and spin?—
'Some of the starry twinkles left in.'

Where did you get that little tear?—
'I found it waiting when I got here.'

What makes your forehead so smooth and high?—
'A soft hand stroked it as I went by.'

What makes your cheek like a warm white rose?—
'I saw something better than any one knows.'

Whence that three-cornered smile of bliss?—
'Three angels gave me at once a kiss.'

Where did you get this pearly ear?—
'God spoke, and it came out to hear.'

Where did you get those arms and hands?—
'Love made itself into bonds and bands.'

Feet, whence did you come, you darling things?—
'From the same box as the cherubs' wings.'

How did they all just come to be you?—
'God thought about me, and so I grew.'

But how did you come to us, my dear?—
'God thought about you, and so I am here.'"

II. THE SCHOOLBOY

"But Samuel ministered before the LORD, being a child, girded with a linen ephod. Moreover his mother made him a little coat, and brought it to him from year to year, when she came up with her husband to offer the yearly sacrifice."—1 SAM. ii. 18, 19.

I

THE second of the Seven Ages is "the Schoolboy"; for now the little baby has grown up to be a laddie, and we are told to look at him as he is on his way to school some summer morning.

> "Then, the whining SCHOOLBOY, with his satchel
> And shining morning face, creeping like snail
> Unwillingly to school."

William Shakespeare himself was educated at the public grammar school of Stratford until he was about thirteen years old, at which time his father, John Shakespeare—a merchant who dealt in corn and wood, and in gloves and leather—was forced by straitened circumstances to take him from school to help in the business. The boy would probably enter the grammar school when he was seven years old, having already learned a little reading and writing at home or at the petty school.

And he would be drilled chiefly in Latin, until he was able to read Ovid, Cicero, and Virgil. There were also "satchels" in Queen Elizabeth's time for schoolboys to carry their books in, so that we can think of the poet as describing himself in the famous lines which we have quoted.

The river Avon at Stratford flows just outside the east wall of the church within which the poet is buried; and the American poet Longfellow, as he stood upon the terrace, was moved to address the stream in these words—

> "Flow on, sweet river, like his verse
> Who lies beneath this sculptured hearse,
> Nor wait beside the churchyard wall
> For him who cannot hear thy call.
>
> Thy playmate once, I see him now,
> A boy with sunshine on his brow,
> And hear in Stratford's quiet street
> The patter of his little feet."

II

In the American Shakespeare window within the parish church "the Schoolboy" is represented by SAMUEL, whom his mother Hannah is in the act of introducing to Eli the high priest. Samuel is a child with fair hair, a green coat, and crimson socks; while on a small table beside Eli stands one of the Tabernacle lamps, which is both flaming and smoking. Hannah's taking of her little son to Shiloh, and leaving him there with the priest, was her putting him to school.

We must remember that in Old Testament times the Hebrews had no schools at all in our sense of the word; no public schools, no adventure schools, no dame schools, no schools of any kind. The word "school" does not occur even once in the Old Testament; and although it does occur once in the New ("the school of one Tyrannus"), it means in that place only a lecture-room. It was not until after the seventy years' Exile, when synagogues were set up, that schools also began to be founded for the instruction of the young in the law of Moses. The Jews hold in special honour the memory of Joshua, the son of Gamla, who lived some eighteen hundred years ago, because of the great work which he did in perfecting their system of education. Joshua arranged for the erection of schools in every town and village, and for the attendance of the children from the age of seven. The Jewish historian, Josephus, who lived in the generation after Jesus Christ, says, "Our principal care of all is this: to educate our children well." And the sayings of the Hebrew sages include many like these: "A town which has no school and no school-children should be destroyed"; "The world only exists by the breath of our school-children."

But it is not certainly known whether schools had become general at the time when our Saviour was a boy in Nazareth. There are, indeed, some very old and silly legends about Jesus and His

schoolmates, and about Jesus and the schoolmaster. One is, that when the schoolmaster began to teach Jesus the letters of the alphabet Jesus said, "Explain to Me the meaning of A, and I will explain the meaning of B."

Although the child Samuel never attended a public school, he yet had his "schools and schoolmasters." The record of his childhood tells us of three different schools in which he was educated.

There was (1) *the School of the "Little Coat"* (1 Sam. ii. 19). That wee garment reminds us of the coat of character which Samuel got from his mother in the school of home. Mothers provide not only clothes for their children's bodies, but also *habits* for their souls. The influence of the parents streams during every hour into the children through their eyes and ears. There was (2) *the School of the "Linen Ephod"* (ver. 18). The ephod was a kind of surplice worn by the priests, and Samuel wore one because he was a little minister. How much he must have learned every day in the Tabernacle from the smoking sacrifices, and the crowds of worshippers three times a year, and the work of the priests and the high priest! There was (3) the *School of the Heavenly Voice* (chap. iii. 10, 21). For God called Samuel, while he was still a child, to be a prophet; and the Lord's voice became familiar to him, as it spoke into his youthful ear many holy oracles which Samuel was to convey to all Israel.

III

You boys and girls also are at more schools than one.

There is the public school, to which you may sometimes "creep unwillingly," as is quite natural. John Addington Symonds, who became a famous English writer of books, says about himself, "When I went to Harrow I felt that my heart would break as I scrunched the muddy gravel down to my tutor's house. But I said to my heart, 'I have to be made a man here.'"

And there are also other schools, such as the school of home, the school of companionship, the school of nature, the school of books, the school of the Church, and the school of the Holy Spirit.

Some of you may have heard of a great Scotsman called Hugh Miller—a stone-mason, geologist, journalist, and Church leader—who lived two generations ago. He wrote a very interesting book called *My Schools and Schoolmasters.* Miller shows in that book that he had learned very much in the school of nature. He found

> "Tongues in trees, books in the running brooks,
> Sermons in stones, and good in everything."

What Wordsworth wrote about Lord Clifford was also true of him—

> "His daily teachers had been woods and rills,
> The silence that is in the starry sky,
> The sleep that is among the lonely hills."

It remains to say that if it be true that "all the world's a stage," it is true also that all the world's a school. Home, friends, nature, books, travel, benefits, hardships, afflictions, are all schoolmasters whose teaching ought to lead us nearer to God and to Christ. Our training in the school of life should be daily making us more pure and true and brave. It will be well if, when our life is over, the same words can be used of each of us which are written on the grave of John Richard Green, the historian, in the Protestant cemetery at Mentone, "He died learning."

III. THE LOVER

"And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her."—GEN. xxix. 20.

I

I MUST now speak about the third of the Seven Ages. The first is "the Infant"; the second is "the Schoolboy"; and the third is "the Lover."

"The Lover" is represented on the American picture window in Stratford Church by the patriarch JACOB. Jacob is in the act of kissing his cousin Rachel, the young and beautiful shepherdess, when he met her at the well in Haran. We see on the picture the framework of stone above the well, with rope and pulley. Jacob is dressed in a blue robe, with his staff in his hand, and a wallet hanging by his side. And at the foot of the picture, behind Rachel, are a few of her father Laban's sheep.

The artist intends that when we read the words—

> "And then the LOVER,
> Sighing like furnace, with a woeful ballad
> Made to his mistress' eyebrow,"

we are to find a Bible example of him in Genesis, chap. xxix. There we read in ver. 11, "And Jacob kissed Rachel"; and in ver. 20, "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." The whole story of Jacob and Rachel has much in it that appeals to the deepest feelings of the heart.

How old were these two cousins when they met for the first time at the well? Unless we consider the matter carefully we might judge that Jacob was a young man and Rachel a young woman. But Jacob must have been now at least sixty years of age; and some make him out to have been still older. He must have had quite the look of a confirmed bachelor when he left his father's tent at Beersheba, staff in hand. Rachel, again, was probably a girl of about twelve when Jacob met her at the well in Haran; and he kissed her because she was his cousin.

But from the hour of that first meeting Rachel was loved by Jacob with a very deep love. And he was content to serve Laban her father as a hired shepherd for seven years — for fourteen, indeed, as it turned out—in order to get her for his wife. Very beautifully is it said that his first seven years at Padan-aram, with the drudgery which every day brought, seemed to Jacob "but a few days"—he loved his young cousin so much. The work which Jacob had to do was toilsome, and his master Laban was selfish, greedy, and

tricky; but the years of waiting passed happily in the sweet society of Rachel, and in the hope of receiving her as the prize for his seven years' labour.

II

Sometimes the love that young people have for each other is called "foolish"; and certainly there are sweethearts who do show a foolish enough fondness. We are apt to smile when we speak about this kind of affection. The great poet, who in his youth courted Anne Hathaway as they walked together in the leafy lanes of Warwickshire, speaks here of the lover as "sighing like furnace," and writing a poem about his sweetheart's eyebrow.

But love is not in itself foolish, for God has given it to man, and He has not given him anything that is foolish or useless. This affection has been in the world from the very beginning. Wherever it occurs it is "the old, old story"—

> "Old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful always,
> Love immortal and young in the endless succession of lovers."

That cannot be foolish, and something only to make fun about, which is spoken of in both the Old and the New Testaments (and the Bible is the most serious of all books) as a type of the love that there is between the Saviour and His people. The Church is to the Lord Jesus Christ what Rachel was to the patriarch Jacob—His Bride. She is so called in the Psalms and the

Prophets, in the Epistles and the Book of Revelation; and Jesus also speaks of Himself as the Bridegroom of His people.

Yes, Jacob's love for Rachel ought to remind us of the deeper and purer love of Christ for the Church. For her sake He "served," became a Shepherd, gave His service and His life-blood, being "obedient unto death," that He might purchase her and unite her to Himself for ever.

> "The Church's one foundation
> Is Jesus Christ her Lord;
> She is His new creation,
> By water and the Word.
> From heaven He came and sought her
> To be His holy Bride;
> With His own blood He bought her,
> And for her life He died."

"Christ loved the Church, and gave Himself for her; that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the Word, that He might present her to Himself a glorious Church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that she should be holy and without blemish."

IV. THE SOLDIER

"Joshua made war a long time with all those kings."—JOSH. xi. 18.

I

THE fourth of the Seven Ages is "the Soldier." He comes next in order after "the Lover." The poet's words are—

> "Then, a SOLDIER,
> Full of strange oaths, and bearded like the pard,
> Jealous in honour, sudden and quick in quarrel,
> Seeking the bubble reputation
> Even in the cannon's mouth."

The human creature that was at first a small and weak infant has now become a strong young man; and "the glory of a young man is his strength."

In his portrait of "the Soldier" the poet compares his beard to the whiskers of the panther, which give that animal a very fierce aspect.

An army is made up of young men who are strong in bone and muscle, and who live a life of duty, obeying the call of the trumpet. The career of arms trains the soldier in habits of obedience, attention, patience, and courage. It is wonderful how many men, afterwards eminent in

science, art, and letters, served in early life as soldiers, and fought in battles. Among the ancient Greeks and Romans there were Socrates, Æschylus, Xenophon, Julius Cæsar, and Horace. These were first of all soldiers, and afterwards great authors. In more modern times there have been, for example, Dante, Chaucer, Ben Jonson, Sir Philip Sidney, John Bunyan, Cervantes, Camoens, Ignatius Loyola, Descartes, and George Washington. These were all, to begin with, soldiers.

In many countries in our day, such as France and Germany, and indeed in all the great continental countries, the mass of the young men are by law called upon to be trained as soldiers, and to serve for a time in the army. This system of compelling young men to enrol themselves as recruits is called "conscription."

II

On the stained-glass window in Stratford Church "the Soldier" is represented from Holy Scripture by JOSHUA, the leader of the Hebrews in the conquest of Palestine. The artist shows us that hero seated on a war-horse, and plunging his spear into the prostrate body of one of the kings of Canaan.

Joshua is the first soldier of whom we read in the Bible. He was a godly man, and a simple, manly, brave warrior. Born a slave in the land

of Goshen, he grew up in the brickfields of Egypt, and tasted the bitterness of the cruel bondage. But we meet with him first at Rephidim, not far from Mount Sinai, where he commanded the Israelites in the fight against Amalek, and, after an obstinate battle, won a decisive victory. Joshua was then about forty-four years of age, older by a good few years than Shakespeare's "Soldier" in the Seven Ages.

After the death of Moses, Joshua led the armies of Israel across the Jordan, conquered the Promised Land, and divided it among the twelve tribes. For seven years he had to pass through dreadful scenes of blood, yet he swerved not from the work upon the wicked Canaanites which God had given him to do. At the beginning of the campaign the Lord most suitably appeared to Joshua as a Warrior, with a drawn sword in His hand; and the vision of that glittering sword went before Joshua to Jericho and Ai, Bethhoron and Merom, until he "took the whole land."

But Israel's leader does not much resemble "the Soldier" of the poet. Joshua was not "full of strange oaths." He was a man who feared God, and who fought all his battles in God's name, that God's promise to Israel might be fulfilled. Joshua was "jealous in honour," but only where the Lord's honour was concerned. He sought nothing for himself; no man was ever more unselfish. He desired no "bubble reputa-

tion." Joshua was by no means "sudden and quick in quarrel." Instead of that, he was at all times calmly and seriously devoted to duty. He sought the welfare of his country, and he never abused his power.

In short, Joshua was a great saint. Scripture does not mention any defect in his character. He made prayer and renewed dedication to God a preparation for his battles, and he built altars to help to keep the people in mind of the victories which God gave them.

III

War is in itself a dreadful evil, and it is condemned by the religion of Jesus Christ except where it is a sad necessity. The spirit of the Gospel breathes forgiveness and love; and the result of its triumphs will be to banish wars and fightings from the earth, and make it the abode of peace. Yet it is true that some of the noblest of men have been soldiers. There have been Christian heroes in modern times who have had the same devout spirit as Joshua. Gustavus Adolphus, King of Sweden, was a great general, and his army the model of an army. There is in the whole range of history no finer character. Religious himself, he saw to it that, morning and evening, every regiment gathered round its chaplain in a circle for prayer. Oliver Cromwell, the Lord Protector of the British Commonwealth,

was a man for all ages to admire as a Christian soldier and statesman; and his advice to his troops was, "Put your trust in God, but mind to keep your powder dry." Colonel Mackay, in the time of the Revolution, was one of the best officers of King William III. At the fall of Athlone in 1691, Mackay heard some of his men cursing and swearing as they stumbled among the rubbish of the ramparts. "My lads," he shouted, "you are brave fellows, but do not swear. We have more reason to thank God for the goodness which He has shown us this day than to take His Name in vain." Of the same type were Sir Henry Havelock and Charles George Gordon, both of them true English heroes, and also good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Of each of these it may be said, as Tennyson wrote of the Duke of Wellington, that he was—

> "Great in council and great in war,
> Foremost captain of his time,
> Rich in saving common sense,
> And, as the greatest only are,
> In his simplicity sublime."

The name *Joshua* means "Jehovah is salvation." That great soldier was a type of Christ, and the first to bear the Name which is above every name. And the Saviour expects all His people still to be soldiers, as Joshua was, in the holy war against sin.

V. THE JUSTICE

"And all Israel heard of the judgment which the king had judged."—1 KINGS iii. 28.

I

THE judgment referred to in these words is the decision of the young king Solomon about the living infant, which two women claimed each of them as her own. The king of Israel in those early times was the judge in the courts of justice. He sat at the gate of Jerusalem to decide whatever causes were brought before him.

Solomon had newly begun to reign, and he was a lad of only about twenty years of age; some, indeed, think he was no more than fifteen. As we read the passage that tells about his famous judgment a striking scene rises before the mind. We see the young king sitting on his throne, in an open place at the city gate, in the bright, clear morning; and he has his guards and counsellors and ministers of state standing around him. In front are two young women, who have brought with them two little babies—the one baby living, and the other dead. Each of the women insists that the living child is her child. The king listens patiently; and the people stand by, wondering

what their boyish sovereign will determine. It seems to some of the old men present that he will not be able to decide the matter at all. They cannot see how it is possible for him to do so.

But God's Holy Spirit in a moment lit up Solomon's mind with a flash of wisdom. He ordered one of his soldiers to divide the living baby in two, and give half to each of the women. Of course, he did not intend this to be done; but he thought that the way in which the two women received the proposal might show to whom the infant really belonged. And it turned out that the king was right. A cry came at once from the heart of the child's mother: "O my lord, give her the living child, and in no wise slay it." All the love of a mother was in that passionate cry. The woman felt at the time that she could be content if only her child lived, and she could see it sometimes, even although it were called the child of another. So Solomon pointed to her, repeated her words, and then burst forth with his decision, "*She* is the mother." A great awe fell at once upon the spectators, and spread throughout Jerusalem, and over all the land, because of the wisdom which the Lord had given to the young king.

II

The fifth of the Seven Ages of Man in the poet Shakespeare's drama is "the Justice." The word

means here a judge or magistrate. And in the window of the church at Stratford "the Justice" is represented by SOLOMON, with the sword in his hand, ordering the living child to be cut in two.

Many different varieties of magistrate get the name "justice,"—from a "Justice of the Peace" to "the Lord Justice-General," the highest judge of the Court of Session in Scotland; and to "the Lord Chief-Justice," the principal judge of the King's Bench in England. But the poet's "Justice" in the Seven Ages is neither the head of the Court of Session nor one of the exalted London judges. Still less is he the boy-king Solomon, or one of the dictator magistrates—such as Gideon—in the Book of Judges. He is probably only a bailie or an alderman in some royal burgh.

"The Infant" grew up till he became "the Schoolboy," "the Schoolboy" gave place to "the Lover," and "the Lover" to "the Soldier." Now we find that "the Soldier" (who was perhaps a volunteer) has settled down into a respectable, stout, middle-aged gentleman, who is fond of a good dinner, and particularly loves roast chicken ("capon"). He stands so well with his fellow-citizens that he has become a magistrate. His beard now is of a different *cut* from the "military" beard of the soldier; it is the pointed "legal" beard of the sixteenth century, such as we see in portraits of Lord Bacon, as well as of Raleigh

and Spenser, and of Shakespeare himself. Here is his portrait—

> "The JUSTICE,
> In fair round belly with good capon lined;
> With eyes severe, and beard of formal cut,
> Full of wise saws and modern instances;
> And so he plays his part."

This picture is very different from that of "the Soldier." "The Justice" has reached the period of life's maturity. James Nasmyth, the inventor of the steam-hammer, calls the years between thirty and fifty "The Tableland of Life"; because during this period the functions of the body are in full action, and the mind also is in the best condition of working energy. The poet's "Justice" has evidently crossed the "tableland," and is about to leave it behind him.

Sometimes we speak of the soldier as "serving his country," and as being in the best sense a patriot. But the fact is, that every good citizen, and every upright magistrate, and every honourable tradesman serves his country too. A bailie on the bench, or a sheriff in his court, does quite as important service to his country as the soldier does.

The profession of the law is a very noble one. It is so because the purpose of it is to promote the triumph of justice and right in the land, and to compose strife between man and man. In the view of every right-thinking mind, law is a sacred thing. It is so because truth is sacred, and because righteousness is sacred. Thomas Hobbes,

the great English philosopher, said that to listen to certain judges speaking from the bench was to listen not simply to law, living and armed, but to Justice itself. The grandest thought one can have about a magistrate is this, that in his person and office he is a symbol and a shadow of the Person and work of Almighty God, "the Judge of all the earth," the Chief Magistrate of the universe.

"The Lord reigneth, let the earth rejoice; let the multitude of isles be glad thereof. Clouds and darkness are round about Him: righteousness and judgment are the foundation of His throne."

VI. THE PANTALOON

"Now Abraham and Sarah were old and well stricken in age."
—GEN. xviii. 11.

I

SHAKESPEARE portrays the last but one of the Ages of Man in these words—

> "The sixth age shifts
> Into the lean and slippered PANTALOON,
> With spectacles on nose, and pouch on side;
> His youthful hose well saved, a world too wide
> For his shrunk shank; and his big, manly voice,
> Turning again toward childish treble, pipes
> And whistles in his sound."

The name and character of "the Pantaloon" are taken from the stage of the theatre; and "all the world's a stage." The pantaloon comes from the Italian comedy, and he is usually represented as an old man, who is both silly in mind and slovenly in attire.

In the American window in Stratford Church the Sixth Age is represented (not very appropriately) by the patriarch ABRAHAM receiving the three angels into a tent with pink curtains; while his wife Sarah is seen sitting within the tent behind her husband. Abraham is by this time an old

man. He has lived in the world for about a hundred years, when now he "entertains angels unawares" (Gen. xviii. 1–15).

The picture, as we see it with the eye of the mind, is full of beauty. There is in it the charm of Eastern life in the olden time. It is noon at Hebron, and Abraham is sitting in the door of his tent, looking out for any weary pilgrim to whom he may offer rest and refreshment. Soon three men come up, and the patriarch receives them with all the courtesy which belongs to Eastern manners. He speaks as if their acceptance of his attentions will be a favour to himself. He orders water to be brought for their travel-soiled feet; he invites them to lie down under the shade of the tree, and he provides them with a comfortable meal. Sarah prepares cakes. Abraham himself brings a calf, and one of his young men cooks it. And there are also set on the table both butter-milk and sweet-milk.

Who are these three strangers? They seem to be men, but they are really angels. And One of the three stands out from the other two as being of higher rank than they. The three strangers are none other than the Lord Himself, the Second Person of the Godhead, and two angels in attendance upon Him. The uncreated Angel of the Covenant actually became Abraham's guest, and partook of his bread, and talked with him about Sarah, and repeated the promise which He had

made before about the birth of her son. Also, when He had sent forward toward Sodom the two angels who accompanied Him, He told Abraham His purpose of doom regarding the wicked Cities of the Plain, and allowed Abraham, as a friend, to plead for them.

Though Abraham was a hundred years old when he got this great honour of a visit from the Lord, he was so vigorous as to be still only in the sixth of the Seven Ages of life. For the patriarchs lived much longer than men live now.

II

The poet makes his "Pantaloon" a man who is visibly "failing," as we say, in health and strength. When "the Pantaloon" was "the Justice" he was stout and hearty; but now he is thin and pale, and his clothes are much too roomy for him. He has passed his sixty-third year—the year that has been called "the grand climacteric," and has been supposed to be a critical period in a man's life—a time in which some great change takes place. In short, he is now an old man, and is rapidly "going down the hill."

The close of the sixty-fifth year is the period at which King Edward causes those who are in the Civil Service to retire from active duty, as if they were "pantaloons." That is right enough as regards many. But there are some people who have not begun to fail even at sixty-five.

We read of some Grand Old Men in the Bible. Moses, for example, began the great work of his life when he was eighty years of age, and laboured at that work for forty years. Joshua was eighty-four years old when he crossed the Jordan at the head of the hosts of Israel. Samuel lived to be an aged man, and kept his sacred influence over the nation to the last. But, of course, as we have said, men lived longer in those days than they do now.

In more modern times there are some who have long passed "the grand climacteric" without becoming "pantaloons." The Greek philosopher Plato died, pen in hand, as Cicero tells us, at the age of eighty-one. Samuel Johnson wrote his best book, *The Lives of the Poets*, when he was seventy-five years old. James Watt learned to read German at seventy-five. Lord Palmerston died, whilst still Queen Victoria's Prime Minister, at the age of eighty. Tennyson, the poet laureate, wrote "Crossing the Bar" when he was fourscore years old and a little more. When Principal Rainy was eighty years of age, his was still the leading mind in the United Free Church of Scotland.

It is quite possible for an old man to continue to have a young heart. Some men, the older they grow, become the more interested both in nature and in human nature. They live a full life to the end, as the poet Wordsworth desired to

do. All young people should learn by heart that great poet's famous lines—

> "My heart leaps up when I behold
> A rainbow in the sky:
> So was it when my life began;
> So is it now I am a man;
> So be it when I shall grow old,
> Or let me die!
> The Child is father of the Man;
> And I could wish my days to be
> Bound each to each by natural piety."

This sixth of the Seven Ages has two lessons in it for young people. The first is this, *Honour every old man.* Respect him for what he has been, and for what he is, and for what he is soon to be. The second lesson is, *If you would be spared to old age yourself, live a godly life.* "Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long upon the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee." "The fear of the Lord prolongeth days; but the years of the wicked shall be shortened." Robert Browning, in his poem on old age entitled *Rabbi Ben Ezra*, says what is right when he begins it with the invitation—

> "Grow old along with me!
> The best is yet to be,
> The last of life, for which the first was made."

VII. "SANS EVERYTHING"

"And he discerned him not."—GEN. xxvii. 23.

I

WE come now to the last of the Seven Ages. The first was "the Infant"; the second, "the Schoolboy"; the third, "the Lover"; the fourth, "the Soldier"; the fifth, "the Justice"; the sixth, "the Pantaloon." And now the poet writes these lines about the seventh and last act in the drama of human life—

> "Last scene of all,
> That ends this strange eventful history,
> Is second childishness and mere oblivion;
> Sans teeth, sans eyes, sans taste, sans—everything."

"Sans" means *without*. It is both a French word and an English word. The French word has been adopted without change of spelling; but it is pronounced as an English word.

The sixth age is that of the superannuated old man; but the seventh is that of the AGED MAN in his dotage, his second childhood. His gums now are toothless; his eyes are dim, so that he cannot see; he is unable to taste what he eats or

drinks; he is full of years, and "sans everything" else.

On the American stained-glass window in the church at Stratford-on-Avon within which Shakespeare is buried, the very Aged Man is represented by ISAAC lying on his couch, with his son Jacob kneeling before him, and presenting the venison for which his father had so eagerly longed.

Isaac was now very old and feeble, and too blind to distinguish his sons from each other. The bedridden old man wanted to bestow his last blessing upon his elder son Esau, who was his favourite. But through Rebekah's cunning the blessing was pronounced upon Jacob. For Rebekah dressed up Jacob in Esau's best clothes, and in the skins of two young goats; and Jacob gave his hand and face to his father's touch, told as many lies as were necessary, and thus by a mean fraud secured the patriarch's blessing. But, indeed, it was on both sides a sad game of craft and deceit. If Jacob and his mother deceived the old man very wickedly, Isaac had first of all sought, in an underhand kind of way, to secure the blessing for Esau.

Isaac was on his deathbed, and a very aged man in such circumstances is apt to be "sans everything." Even if he is not bedfast, he will probably be like old Barzillai, King David's friend; he will have dim eyes, dull ears, grey hairs, feeble hands, and tottering limbs. "The days of our years are

threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away." Old age is the time of second childhood; but while the first childhood is beautiful, the second is very apt not to be so. Some one has pointed out this difference between the two, that while the child beats his nurse and cries out for his gruel, the old man sits in the chimney-corner supping his gruel, and is thankful if nobody beats him.

Even Martin Luther, the Reformer, who had had a joyous nature for sixty years, became dejected and gloomy towards the close of his life. He said, "I am indolent, weary, and indifferent; in other words, old and useless. I have finished my journey, and nothing remains but for the Lord to unite me to my fathers. I am weary of life, if this can be called life."

II

The picture of the Aged Man in his dotage has in it an important lesson for boys and girls. In the words of the Wise Man, the lesson is this: "Remember now thy Creator in the days of thy youth, while the evil days come not, nor the years draw nigh, when thou shalt say, I have no pleasure in them" (Eccles. xii. 1). It is both easier and happier to attend to religion at once, in the sunny days of youth, than to put off doing so until the

"evil days" when the aged person is "sans everything."

The Wise Man, in the verses that follow, describes those "evil days." When the body is about to begin to break up, the sun and moon do not seem to shine so brightly; the days feel colder, and life appears dull and cloudy (ver. 2). The legs, which support the frame, become unsteady; and the arms grow feeble. The teeth fall out, one after another, and the few that are left cannot chew the food (ver. 3). The eyes become dim; and the mouth closes, like the shutting of a door, because the jaws fall together. The voice becomes "a childish treble"; the old man can no longer either sing himself, or enjoy the singing of others (ver. 4). He dislikes having to walk up a steep path; and when he requires to travel he becomes timid and anxious. His white hairs are like almond-blossoms; the slightest duty is a burden; and appetite for the most savoury food is gone (ver. 5). Soon he must go to his long home; and his body shall be broken up in death (ver. 6).

This is a picture of the old age of a worldly or wicked man; and as we gaze upon it the Wise Man says to us, Do not delay to give your heart to God until you are "sans everything."

Such are the Seven Ages of man's life. But, after all, the seventh is not the end. Christ has taught us that it is only the beginning. "What

benefits do believers receive from Christ at death? The souls of believers are at their death made perfect in holiness, and do immediately pass into glory; and their bodies, being still united to Christ, do rest in their graves till the resurrection." "What benefits do believers receive from Christ at the resurrection? At the resurrection, believers, being raised up in glory, shall be openly acknowledged and acquitted in the day of judgment, and made perfectly blessed in the full enjoying of God to all eternity." May all who read these addresses about the Seven Ages receive grace to follow Christ, so that, whether they should live long or die soon, those priceless benefits may be theirs!

VIII

Jehovah My Shepherd

"The LORD is my Shepherd."—Ps. xxiii. 1.

KING DAVID, when he was a boy at home in his father's house, used to keep his father's sheep; and often in his after-life he thought with satisfaction and joy of Almighty God as bearing the same relation to himself as that in which he had stood to the flock at Bethlehem. He felt as if he were but an individual member of Jehovah's flock. And in this holy song, which is one of the very finest of his Psalms, the keynote is, "The Lord is my Shepherd."

There are three things, David says, which God does for him as a member of the spiritual flock.

I

HE FEEDS ME.

This is the thought in verses 1 and 2 of the Psalm. "I shall not want," either for meat or drink. There are the "green pastures" and the "still waters."

Green pastures are "pastures of tender grass"—

the richest and pleasantest possible feeding for the lambs as well as for the ewes. The sheep "lie down" in these. When does a sheep lie down? Some boy or girl may answer, "When it is tired." But the Psalmist means also here that the sheep lies down in the green pastures when it has had enough. It lies down to chew the cud, that is, the grass which it has hastily cropped, and which it brings back from its first stomach to chew again more thoroughly.

"Still waters" are for the sheep when it is thirsty. In our country it is seldom that a sheep is seen drinking. The herbage in our damp climate is so full of moisture that it is meat and drink to the sheep all in one. If a sheep is seen drinking out of a brook in England or Scotland the shepherd knows that the animal is not well. But of course it is very different in the hot climate of Syria. David regularly led his flock to drink of the cool streams of the valley; and indeed during the heat of summer they would have died of drought if he had not found water for them. It had to be "still" water too. A sheep, being a timid creature, never quenches its thirst where the brook brawls and babbles noisily over stones; it always seeks out a spot where the water is perfectly quiet.

Now the royal Psalmist looked to Jehovah his Shepherd for meat and drink to his soul. God had given him a mind and heart that hungered

and thirsted, and he was sure also that God would satisfy its needs. The experience of the Lord's people is that He satisfies the human soul beyond all thought, and desire, and hope. Christ's flock, and every member of it, feed on the truth about His Person and His work. They live on His Word. They feast on His love. David says: "The Lord my Shepherd gives me food and rest: I can lack nothing."

II

He Guides Me.

This is what David says in verse 3: "He restoreth my soul: He leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for His Name's sake." In the Revised Version the word "leadeth" has been changed into "guideth." That is the only word in the Psalm which the Revisers have altered, and it is a better translation of the word in the Hebrew. (The boys and girls know that the Psalm was originally written in Hebrew.) We have the word "leadeth" in verse 2; but the word in verse 3 is a different word in the original, and this latter word the Revisers have translated "guideth."

The "leadeth" in verse 2 refers to the shepherd going before the sheep, down to the burn-side, and the flock following him. But the "leadeth"—or, rather, "guideth"—in verse 3 speaks of what happens when the sheep have left the green pastures and are travelling on the weary road,

with its heat and dust. Should one of the flock suddenly leave the path and stray into some private field, or garden, or vineyard, the shepherd "restores" it—that is, goes after it, and brings it back from the forbidden place. The Syrian shepherd has a crook, or curved stick, or staff bent at the end, for this kind of guidance of the sheep. (A bishop or abbot also has a pastoral staff, as a symbol of his care for his flock; because he is looked upon as a shepherd of souls.) When one of the sheep begins to go astray, the shepherd will put his crook round the animal's neck, and gently draw it back into the right path.

Even so does our Saviour-Shepherd guide His flock. The straight paths in which He conducts them are "the paths of righteousness"—ways of faithfulness on the part of the Shepherd, and ways of right conduct on the part of the flock. He *guides* the sheep in these paths; He does not drive them. Anybody can drive sheep, especially if he has a dog at his heels; but it is a different thing to guide them. That means the separate attachment of each sheep to the shepherd. It means confidence on their part, instead of fear. Life is a road for Christ's sheep to walk on, their journeys being relieved every now and then with intervals of rest in the green pastures. And Christ Himself, the Good Shepherd, is their Guide. He who laid down His life for the sheep will bring the entire flock safely home at last to the heavenly fold.

The Psalmist says: "He will do that for me for His Name's sake—out of regard to His revealed character and His promises."

III

He Shields Me.

David says this in verse 4: "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil: for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff, they comfort me." The sheep need not only refreshment and guidance, but also protection. It is not enough that they have the shepherd for their conductor when they are travelling in the open upland; they require the security and the comfort of his presence still more when the way leads through some sunless gorge filled with a gloom like that of death. But in the darkness the shepherd calls, "Ta-a-a-a, ho-o-o!" and the patter of feet answers, as the sheep hurry up to keep close to him in the darkness.

What is meant by this "valley" in the experience of the Lord's flock? Some people think that by "the valley of the shadow of death" the Psalmist means death itself. But, surely, if he had meant that, he would have said it. What he speaks of is not the reality of death, but "the shadow of death." John Bunyan knew the Bible well, and he also had an intimate knowledge of the Christian life. Where does he place

"the Valley of the Shadow of Death" in *The Pilgrim's Progress*? Not at the very end of the pilgrimage,—he puts the bridgeless river there,—but in the middle of the pilgrim's way. What then, I again ask, are we to understand by this valley?

It means simply the biggest, heaviest trial of our life, whatever that may be, and at whatever period of our life it may come. We may pass through this dark and dreadful gorge early in life, or late in life; or, it may be, at the very close of life.

But the Good Shepherd promises to be our shield,—our defence against sorrow and danger. He will bring His flock safely and with comfort to themselves through the long, rocky ravine, and out into the bright sunshine at the farther end. The sheep feel secure and brave because He is with them, and because the rod and the staff are in His hands.

What are "Thy rod and Thy staff"? The "rod" was a thick heavy-headed oak club for the defence of the flock against wild beasts; strong enough to brain the most savage brutes, and very useful for driving them away. David would kill the lion and the bear, that had taken each a lamb out of the flock, with his rod or club. The "staff" was the crook of which I have already spoken; or sometimes it was a straight pole, about six feet long, for mountain-climbing, and for guiding and striking troublesome sheep or goats. The Syrian shepherd of to-day still carries these

weapons, although he is often armed also with a gun.

The Psalmist mentions the rod and the staff to express his confidence in the power and goodness of the Lord his Shepherd. He says, "I will have no fear, even when I must pass through the most dismal trial of my life. The presence of Him who sends the sorrow is the best help to bear it, and it is an all-sufficient help."

We have seen in this address what the Good Shepherd does for His flock: He feeds them, and guides them, and shields them. But what have you and I to do? We have to make sure that we choose Jehovah as our Shepherd. Our Shepherd is *Jehovah*—a word which means the Eternal God, and also His people's Covenant God. "The Eternal God is thy Refuge": it is for each of us, therefore, to enter into personal covenant with Him, and say, "The Lord is *my* Shepherd." This fourth word "my" is important. It speaks of the relation of God to the individual life. When I say, "Jehovah is *my* Shepherd," I mean that He knows me, cares for me, pities me, guides and helps me. Only true faith can honestly say this word "my." If I am to say it, I must take the Good Shepherd to my very heart.

IX

Jesus the Carpenter

"Is not this the carpenter?"—MARK vi. 3.

I

IN the north of Holland, and about five miles from Amsterdam, there is a shipbuilding and manufacturing town called Zaandam; and in that town a very humble old house is carefully preserved in which a carpenter lodged for a time more than two hundred years ago. Visitors to Zaandam go to see that old house: it is on record that it was visited in the year 1814 by Alexander I., the Czar of Russia. That Emperor went to see it because the carpenter who had lived in it in 1697, and for whose sake the house is still preserved, was no less a personage than one of his own predecessors—Peter the Great, the creator of the modern Russian Empire.

How strange it was for an Emperor to be seen working as a common shipwright in a Dutch building-yard! Yet that was so. He was twenty-five years of age when he placed his name—calling

himself Pieter Timmerman—upon the roll of workmen, and began with his own hands to wield the mallet, and fix the pumps, and twist the ropes. He settled down in two humble rooms and a garret; he rose at four o'clock every morning to his work; he daily boiled his own pot for dinner; and he was paid his wages every Saturday night along with the other ship-carpenters. At first the great man was fit only for the rudest work; but he showed the keenest desire to master every part of the handicraft. He learned also rope-making and sail-making, blacksmith's work, and as much surgery as enabled him to bleed and to pull out teeth. Lord Macaulay says that ambassadors who came to pay their respects to him might sometimes be compelled, much against their will, to clamber up the rigging of a man-of-war, and have an audience with him on the maintop.

On the invitation of King William III., Peter next visited England. The modest house in which he lived in London is still to be seen in Buckingham Street, near the western end of the Strand. After a month's stay he removed to Deptford, which is close by London, and took up his quarters near the dockyard. Bishop Burnet, who visited him there, said afterwards that he had gone to see a great prince, and had found only an industrious shipwright, and a diligent student of naval architecture. The chapel in which Peter worshipped at Deptford was pulled down in the year 1907.

What did the Czar of Muscovy mean by leaving his own country, to which he owed so many duties as its sovereign, in order to wear the garb of an artisan, and labour for a time as a carpenter? The answer is that he came, first to Holland, and then to England, as a working man, for the good of his own countrymen, who were a wild and barbarous people. The empire of Peter the First extended from the borders of Sweden to those of China; but the nobles were brutal, and the peasantry were wretched. In those days Russia had only one seaport, namely, Archangel on the White Sea; but the usefulness of Archangel was limited by the fact that it was clear of ice only for about four months in summer. And the largest Russian ship was about the size of a fishing-boat. So Peter the Great "humbled himself" that he might be the means of elevating and civilising his barbarous subjects. And he was successful in his endeavour. This strange, rough, colossal man actually changed the manners, customs, and laws of the Russians; and he is still revered as the "Father of his country."

II

It was a marvellous sight, that of the Czar of all the Russias, in the garb of a pilot, labouring in a Dutch shipbuilding yard. But the words of the Evangelist Mark, "Is not this the carpenter?" remind us that a still stranger sight was seen, day

after day for a good many years, in Nazareth of Galilee. There, in the carpenter's workshop, Jesus, the Son of God, "the Lord of Time and All the Worlds," earned His daily bread as a Galilean artisan. When He was a boy, Joseph the carpenter taught Him his trade, or as much of it as he had been able to master himself; for tradition says that Joseph was "not very skilful." It would seem too as if, after Joseph was dead, the business in Nazareth had passed into the hands of Jesus. The verse here reads as if His four brothers—James, and Joses, and Juda, and Simon—had by this time all gone away to homes of their own, and had left their mother and her unmarried daughters dependent on her eldest Son. Jesus was the bread-winner of the family. For Mark does not here call Him "the carpenter's son," as Matthew does, but simply "the carpenter."

The Saviour did not, like Peter the First of Russia, come only from an earthly throne to be a labouring man; He came from the highest heaven, and from the centre of its glory. He was in the bosom of the Father. By Him the Father had made the worlds. Yet He stooped to share the ordinary toils and burdens of human life, and became in His humiliation a carpenter. We can think of Him as wearing a coarse white linen smock-frock, which would reach a little below the knees, and be girt at the waist with a leathern belt. He toiled on through the years, making

ploughs and yokes, rakes and harrows, and articles of house-carpentry; earning His bread in the sweat of His face, and supporting His mother and sisters by His labour.

A famous English painter, Mr. Holman Hunt, gave to the world in 1873 a great religious picture, representing Jesus in the workshop at the close of the day. When we look at it, we see that the earthen floor is well covered with shavings, which have come from the planing bench near where Jesus stands. Close by the bench is a trestle of native form; and the large hand-saw has been left in the wood, not yet cut through. Jesus has thrown out His arms as He yawns in weariness; and His shadow formed on the wall in the level evening sunlight, as it is seen with alarm by His mother Mary, looks like that of a man crucified. Mr. Holman Hunt has called this picture "The Shadow of Death."

III

For some time after He had begun His public ministry, our Lord was still known among His acquaintances at Nazareth as "the carpenter." They could not believe that He had become a great Prophet, and still less that He was the Son of God. They judged only by outward appearances, and they thought that the future must continue to be like the present. Jesus was no more than one of themselves. Many of them

had visited His workshop; they had seen Him labouring at the bench; they had used the ploughs, and yokes, and pieces of house furniture which He made for them. Of course they had a great respect for their fellow-villager. He was a careful and good workman. He did not fail to keep His word of promise about the time when orders would be executed. He was always just and fair in His charges. He was never known to lose His temper in connection with any of the troubles of business. But then, He was their neighbour; and it was impossible for them to think of Him as anything more. The last people in the world to recognise a Prophet, when he appears, are his relatives and his fellow-townsmen.

But the fact upon which the Nazarenes based their unbelief is not a hindrance to the faith of Christ's people now. It is the very opposite. We look upon His having been a carpenter, in that obscure village among the hills of Galilee, as a proof of His Divinity. Till He was thirty years of age, Jesus Christ lived the life of a humble artisan. Whence, then, came His wisdom and His mighty works? The doctrine that He is God, who has become Man, explains all the wonders of His earthly life. And it is impossible to explain these otherwise.

The work of Jesus as a carpenter, during the silent years at Nazareth, shows us the greatness of His humility. We see Him here, bearing the

curse of the Fall, and made a curse for us. He laboured in the workshop that He might bring Himself as near as possible to the great majority of those whom He came to save. His years of toil in the sweat of His face have shed glory over the life of hand labour; and it should attract the toiling multitudes to Christ when they remember that He was a carpenter.

X

Clean Hands

"He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."—Job xvii. 9.

I

ONE day a little boy called John was seen to wash his hands very often. His elder brother Henry saw him go quite a number of times to the hollow stone by the well to do this. By and by Henry asked him why he washed his hands so often; and John answered, "Because I wish to be strong." Then Henry said, "Do you think that washing your hands will make you strong?" And the little brother replied, "Yes."

When the evening came, Henry asked John how he had come to think that washing his hands frequently would give him strength. John answered, "Because I read it in the Bible." "Where is the place?" enquired his brother. The little boy got the Book, turned up the seventeenth chapter of Job, and read these words in the ninth verse, "He that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger." He was quite

sure that washing his hands would give him strength, for the Bible said it would. Then Henry began to explain to him the true meaning of the verse; that "clean hands" denote the habit of doing right, and that those people who continue to do right are sure to increase more and more in power to do right.

Of course it is good to have clean hands in the literal sense. This is helpful to sound health; for, when the hands are clean, the pores of the skin are open, and these take in a lot of fresh air. This desirable state of things cannot usually be, so long as we are working with our hands; but, as soon as we have finished our work, we ought to wash our hands, and make them as clean as possible. Soiled hands, at a time when they do not require to be soiled, are not one of the marks of a gentleman. There is some truth in the proverb which says that "cleanliness is next to godliness," even although that saying comes from John Wesley, and not from the Bible. We may be sure that God does not wish to see young people who love Him going about with their finger-nails in deep mourning.

It is true that the Pharisees one day complained to Jesus about His disciples, that they had noticed some of them partake of a meal without having first washed their hands. This was not a complaint that Peter and the others had eaten their food with "dirty" hands, or even that they

had not washed them before meat. For the Jews, who ate with their fingers, always washed their hands before meals for the sake of cleanliness. The complaint meant that the disciples' hands were ceremonially unclean, seeing they had not washed them ceremonially up to the elbows according to the practice of the Pharisees. This was a particular ritual washing enjoined by the leading Jewish teachers, which was to be done before meat, however clean the hands might be. What answer did Jesus make to the fault-finders? His answer was that He had no patience with the rules of the Rabbis about ablutions. He told the Pharisees that they were "hypocrites," and pointed out to them that sin and impurity do not consist in anything outward; they proceed out of the heart.

The hands of the body, however, are its principal instruments of action. And so Holy Scripture speaks of those who are in the habit of doing what is right as having "clean hands."

II

The hands of bad men are not clean. The murderer's hands are not: there is blood upon them. The hands of the man who has perjured himself are not. The hands of the judge who takes bribes are defiled with filthy lucre. The hands of a magistrate like Pontius Pilate are foul indeed. Pilate, when he delivered Jesus to be

crucified, "took water, and washed his hands before the multitude," to try to assure himself and them that he was not responsible for the death of Jesus; he washed his hands when he should have exerted them to do what was right. The forger's hands also are filthy: he imitates the handwriting of another for fraudulent purposes. And the dishonest trader has not clean hands: he allows the money which really belongs to other people to stick to his own fingers.

Often the conscience of the wicked man tells him that his hands are foul. The murderer cannot get quit of the blood that is upon his fingers. Many of the young people know the words which the great poet puts into the mouth of Macbeth after he has killed King Duncan—

> "What hands are here! Ha! they pluck out mine eyes!
> Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
> Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
> The multitudinous sea incarnadine,
> Making the green, one red."

To the same effect are the words of Lady Macbeth, who had her own heavy share of the guilt, although the poet makes Macbeth speak like a man, and his spouse after the manner of a woman—

> "All the perfumes of Arabia will not sweeten this little hand."

A godly man, too, in his time of penitence, laments the sins which he has used his hand to

commit. We remember Archbishop Cranmer, who, when he was burned at the stake at Oxford, thrust into the fire his right hand, which had signed the recantations of his Protestantism, that it might be burned first, exclaiming as he did so, "That unworthy hand!"

III

Among the Jews a solemn washing of the hands was equal to a plea of "Not Guilty." One of the laws of Moses was this, that when the body of a man who had been murdered was found in the field, the elders of the nearest city were to protest their innocence of the murder by washing their hands over the carcase of a heifer which they had beheaded (Deut. xxi. 6).

In the verse before us Job mentions his resolve, during the short time of his life that remained, to persevere in the way of righteousness, and to continue to have "clean" moral habits.

If a man has a pure heart, he will have clean hands. That is, as the Prophet Micah puts it, he will "do justly, and love mercy, and walk humbly with his God." Such a man, when he prays, will lift up "holy hands"; when he cries to God, he will not "regard iniquity in his heart": and thus he will "draw near" as if his body had been "washed with pure water."

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the Lord? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that

hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the Lord, and righteousness from the God of his salvation." "Blessed are the pure in heart: for they shall see God."

By nature no one has a pure heart; and therefore no one can have clean hands. We need God's Holy Spirit to give us a new heart. None of the things which defile a man proceed from that source. And we need also to cleanse our hands from the soil of the natural heart by washing them "in innocency"—in the innocency which results from the application of the blood of Christ. The Redeemer has come both "by water and blood"; therefore "the righteous also shall hold on his way, and he that hath clean hands shall be stronger and stronger."

XI

The Supreme Name

"The Name which is above every name."—PHIL. ii. 9 (R.V.).

THIS Name is the Name JESUS. It was given to the Redeemer by the angel before He was born; and it was given to Him again, in all its fulness of meaning, by His Father after His death, resurrection, and ascension. Jesus is the Greek form of the Hebrew word "Joshua," which means *Jehovah is help*, or *The salvation of Jehovah.* It was one of the commonest Jewish names, and yet it was also the cherished name of the Messiah who was to come.

The name of any particular person brings up before our minds what we know about him. The name of Job suggests the thought of patience; that of Abraham, of faith; that of Samson, of bodily strength; that of Solomon, of wisdom; that of John, of intense affection; that of Paul, of missionary zeal. But the Name of *Jesus* calls up nobler thoughts than any other name, or than all other names put together. It is "the Name which is above every name."

We shall consider some of the respects in which this is so.

I

THE NAME OF JESUS IS THE MOST WONDERFUL OF ALL NAMES.

"His Name shall be called Wonderful," said the Prophet Isaiah. This Name means infinitely more than any other. The riches that are in it are unsearchable.

The *Person* of Jesus is wonderful. He is the Son of Man; but after His death on the cross "God highly exalted Him." The Father gave Him such glory that now He sits above the universe, and all creation has been put under His feet. Jesus does not, like the heathen god Atlas, bear the vault of heaven on His head and hands; His glory is "above the heavens," as that of the Eternal Himself is. But He could not sit there if He were only the Son of Man; therefore He must be the Son of God, that is, God the Son.

The *Character* of Jesus is wonderful. There is in Him everything of God, and also everything of man. All that is simple in childhood, all that is gentle in womanhood, and all that is robust in manhood, dwell together in Him. He began His human life on earth with a spotless childhood; and when He grew up to be a Man it was seen that He was both faultless and perfect. In His purity Jesus stands alone. "Such an High Priest

became us, who is holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners."

The *Work* of Jesus is wonderful. The Name "Jesus," which He bore as a Man, was given Him not because it was a family name, but because of its meaning—"He shall *save* His people from their sins." This was the work which He came into the world to do. He came to deliver us from God's wrath, and from our own wickedness. To accomplish this work "He humbled Himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." There is no salvation in any other, and therefore the Name of Jesus is "above every name."

II

THE NAME OF JESUS IS THE OLDEST OF ALL NAMES.

Some names have a fine flavour of antiquity about them. That of Moses, for example, is illustrious and venerable: it is nearly 3500 years old. That of Abraham is even more ancient: it is well on for 4000 years old. That of Adam seems the very oldest name, for it takes us back to the beginning of the human race. But the Name of Jesus has greater antiquity still, for that of the Eternal Himself is in it.

"The Name that is above every name" is clearly the Name of God. It is the Name *Jehovah*—a word which was always regarded by the Jews

with the deepest reverence. "Jesus" means *Jehovah is Saviour.* The first part of the Name is "Jehovah," which reminds us of the Redeemer's Godhead; while the second part, "Saviour," reminds us that He is Man as well as God.

It was Jehovah who entered into covenant with fallen man—with Abraham, and even with Adam. And Jesus is the human Name of the Angel of the Covenant. It is the Name which runs through all Scripture, and makes the Old and New Testaments one. It explains the high and deep Name "Jehovah" to human hearts.

III

THE NAME OF JESUS IS THE BEST KNOWN OF ALL NAMES.

It fills both a higher and a wider space than any other. It is known in *heaven*, for "the Only-begotten Son is in the bosom of the Father." And Christ as Redeemer has been "made so much better than the angels, as He hath by inheritance obtained a more excellent Name than they." The Name of Jesus is also known in *hell.* The demons whom the Saviour cast out knew who He was, and cried out when they saw Him, "What have we to do with Thee, Jesus, Thou Son of God? art Thou come hither to torment us before the time?"

This sacred Name is also more honoured and reverenced all over *the world* than any other name,

Wherever there are intelligent minds, it is understood; wherever there are loving hearts, it is adored. No other personage is known over the length and breadth of the earth, and both in the old world and the new, as the Lord Jesus Christ is known. The names of Buddha, Confucius, and Mohammed, although familiar to hundreds of millions of the human race, are all Eastern names, and more or less local in their range. But the Name of Jesus has travelled to the farthest corners of the world, and is "sung through every land, by every tongue."

IV

THE NAME OF JESUS IS THE MOST POWERFUL OF ALL NAMES.

Its influence is greater than that of any other. The life which the Redeemer lived in Galilee and Jerusalem nineteen centuries ago cannot cease. The power of that life has continued to wax more and more. For He who died for us upon the cross was raised from the dead, and was received up into heaven. Jesus sits on the right hand of God. And He is powerful, because He is highly exalted.

The fifth book of the New Testament is called "The Acts of the Apostles." But the "acts" recorded in it are really those of Jesus Christ Himself. It was not so much Peter and Paul who performed them as the risen Jesus, through the presence and power of the Holy Spirit. For

example, Peter said about the cure of the lame man at the Beautiful Gate of the Temple, that the miracle was the doing of the glorified Saviour, and not of John and himself. "His Name, through faith in His Name, hath made this man strong, whom ye see and know; yea, the faith which is by Him hath given him this perfect soundness in the presence of you all."

With *men* the Name of Jesus is the most powerful of all names. We build churches in honour of it. We meet together for worship in Christ's Name. We confess it in our prayers and praises. This Name is bound up with our liberty and our civilisation. It is a Name of blessing to all that is lovely and of good report. It is beloved by the excellent of the earth above all others. The first Napoleon said one day, "Alexander, Cæsar, Charlemagne, and I myself have founded great empires; but upon what did these depend? Upon force. Jesus alone founded His empire upon love, and to this very day millions would die for Him."

The Name of Jesus is also powerful with *God*. We ask pardon, peace, cleansing, eternal life,—in short, every spiritual blessing, in this Name. For Jesus is the Son in the house, the Way, the Door, the one and only access. "Neither is there salvation in any other; for there is none other Name under heaven given among men whereby we must be saved."

V

The Name of Jesus is the Most Enduring of all names.

It is quite natural for men to wish not to be forgotten after they have passed away. So "they call their lands after their own names." Often they carve these in marble upon tombstones. Sometimes they found scholarships or prizes to be called after themselves. An American offered Macaulay five hundred dollars if he would introduce the name "Crump" into his *History of England.*

Few names outlast their own generation, and even famous names by and by begin to fade. The name of Mohammed lasts still, but its influence is waning. The name of Moses endures, but it would lose most of its interest if that of Jesus were gone. Amid all the changes of empires and institutions, of arts and letters, one Figure remains supreme in history. "His Name shall endure for ever: His Name shall be continued as long as the sun; and men shall be blessed in Him: all nations shall call Him blessed. Blessed be the Lord God, the God of Israel, who only doeth wondrous things. And blessed be His glorious Name for ever: and let the whole earth be filled with His glory. Amen, and Amen."

XII

The Fifth Sparrow

"Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings, and not one of them is forgotten before God?"—LUKE xii. 6.

I

AMONGST all the ministers of the late United Presbyterian Church in Scotland, which was united with the Free Church of Scotland in the year 1900, the man of rarest genius was Dr. William Bruce Robertson, of Irvine. Dr. Robertson used sometimes to ask the young people in his Bible class how they thought that certain passages of Scripture which seemed to contradict each other could be explained, so as to bring them into agreement. One evening he asked the class how they thought they might be able to reconcile the Evangelist Matthew's version of our Lord's words, "Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing?" with the report given here by Luke, "Are not five sparrows sold for two farthings?" After a few moments one of the lads gave him this answer, "Becus' ye get them cheap if ye tak' a wheen." From the point of view of the lad who gave it, the

reply was a good one. The varying narratives of Matthew and Luke bring out the interesting fact that, if five sparrows were bought, one was thrown into the bargain.

Sparrows and other small birds, such as larks and wagtails, are very abundant in Palestine. They were, and still are, a common article of food among the poor of the people. Many "fowlers" attend the markets of Jerusalem and Jaffa, and offer for sale long strings of these little creatures. The birds are also sometimes sold ready plucked, and stuck in rows on a slender wooden skewer. Jesus knew the price of them. Perhaps when He was a boy at Nazareth He had sometimes bought them. He remembered that those who bought the larger quantity got the better bargain.

II

Now I want to say three things to you about that fifth sparrow.

1. *God cared for it.*

Jesus said, "Not one of them is forgotten before God"—not even that unvalued odd one. The providence of the Almighty extends to the very humblest of His creatures, even to such a mean little bird as the sparrow, which was of so small value that an extra one was thrown in to tempt buyers in the market-place.

There are some of the little birds that we admire, and perhaps even dearly love. We are

attracted to the lark, for its sweet melody; to the redbreast, for its gay plumage; to the thrush, for its fine powers of tuneful song; and to the swallow, because its coming tells us of the spring. But nobody cares much for the sparrow. The form of the bird is not dainty; it has no very beautiful feathers; there is no special charm of melody in its chirp; and it is somewhat bold and impertinent in its manner. That fifth sparrow, in particular, was of no account at all. Yet God, its Maker, did not forget it. He had formed its feeble frame, winged it through the air, providently catered for it, and arranged when it should be caught in the snare, and breathe out its little life. Hamlet said, in the famous tragedy, "There is a special providence in the fall of a sparrow." And Alexander Pope has written this couplet—

> "He sees with equal eye, as God of all,
> A hero perish, or a sparrow fall."

2. *God's care for the sparrow should make us kind to the birds and other creatures.*

Our Maker has given to mankind dominion over the creatures; but, while we have the right to use them for food, we have no right to abuse them for sport. And surely it is wrong to shoot the birds of gay plumage for no other reason than that their wings may be put into ladies' hats. God wants us to be tender-hearted to the lower creatures that He has placed within our power, and to treat

them kindly. To be cruel to dumb birds and beasts is a mark of ungodliness. The same divine truth which the Lord Jesus teaches here is expressed in the lines of William Blake—

> "A robin redbreast in a cage
> Puts all heaven in a rage;
> A skylark wounded on the wing
> Doth make a cherub cease to sing."

Leonardo da Vinci, the painter of the "Last Supper," and a man of universal genius, if ever any man was such, was great in his kindness to birds and other animals. There is a picture within the Palace of the Louvre, in Paris, which shows him releasing caged birds, in order to restore them to liberty. Leonardo used to buy birds in cages for this purpose. And in the picture we see the empty cages at his feet, with the birds fluttering around their deliverer.

I read a story some time ago about two thoughtless boys who one afternoon used a young bird as if it were a target. It was perched near the very top of a high branch of a tree in a garden, and they were trying to hit it by throwing stones. They threw one stone after another, taking aim every time with much care; but, although one of them was very skilful as a stone-thrower, and seldom missed a mark if he shot at it three times, they somehow did not manage to hit that little bird. The elder boy threw more than twenty stones to no purpose; and still the bird looked

down unmoved at the two youngsters, as if it had formed a very poor opinion of their skill. At last the younger boy said to his companion, "I do believe that God is taking care of that bird, and that is why we cannot touch it." The elder boy laughed, and answered that it was scarcely to be expected that God would trouble Himself looking after little birds. But that boy was wrong. He did not remember the words of Jesus, "Not one of them is forgotten before God." And both the boys were cruel, in trying to stone that bird. Some may say they were only thoughtless;—

> "But evil is wrought by want of thought,
> As well as want of heart."

3. *God, who cares for the sparrow, will much more care for His children.*

This is the great lesson which the Lord Jesus is here teaching His disciples. He uses the sparrow as a preacher. And Luke the Evangelist, in reporting our Lord's words, puts the sparrow into the pulpit of the Bible. The little preacher's message is this: "Although I am an insignificant creature, the Heavenly Father cares for me. Although I am of no value in the market, He feeds me. Although my feeble life seems to be of no importance, I shall not die without His consent. And if God cares for me, surely He will concern Himself much more about His own people, who have been made in His image, who

are His own children, and to save whom He gave His Only-begotten Son." Martin Luther learned a lesson of trust in God from considering a sparrow in his garden, and called the bird Doctor Sparrow. It is for each one of us, in like manner, to know and believe the love that God has for us. He is our Father, and He knows what things we have need of before we ask Him. It must have been with a smile that Jesus said to His disciples, "Ye are of more value than many sparrows."

"Yes! though unlimited His works,
His power upholds them all;
He clothes the lilies of the field,
And marks the sparrow's fall;
The ravens young cry not in vain,
Then will He pass not me:
My spirit thirsts for Thee, O Lord,
My spirit thirsts for Thee!"

XIII

Ropes about their Necks

"So they . . . put ropes on their heads, and came to the king of Israel."—1 KINGS xx. 32.

"ON their heads" should rather be "about their necks." This brings out the meaning better. The putting of a rope around the neck was a sign of great earnestness and distress, and was intended to move compassion. It meant that the person who wore the rope was a prisoner of war, and that he knew he was completely at the mercy of the conqueror. The custom referred to in this verse is still followed in China; and upon the monuments of Egypt prisoners of war are to be seen tied together by means of ropes around their necks.

I

This chapter tells of two invasions of the kingdom of Ahab—that is, the kingdom of the Ten Tribes—by the proud and boastful Ben-hadad II., King of Syria. Ben-hadad's purpose

was to sack the city of Samaria and subdue the entire country. But, through the favour and power of the God of Israel, the two sieges of Samaria were unsuccessful, and in both campaigns the Syrians were completely defeated. At Aphek Ben-hadad surrendered as a prisoner to Ahab, and through his servants made an appeal to Ahab to spare his life.

Ben-hadad's messengers not only clothed themselves in sackcloth of black goats' hair, which was the attire of humiliation and mourning; but each of them also appeared before King Ahab with a halter round his neck. The halter meant that he knew he deserved to die. Ahab, if he pleased, might hang him at once; and, if the king was so minded, here was the rope ready for him to use. The King of Israel, however, was easy-tempered. His pity was excited for one of his own rank whose life was in his power; and his vanity was flattered, when he found his proud enemy humbling himself in the dust before him, and begging him to spare his life. So, although he knew he would be doing wrong were he to permit the wicked King of Syria to escape, Ahab weakly spared the life of this merciless enemy of Israel. He spoke of the conquered king as his "brother," invited him to sit in his war chariot, and sent him home to his own country with a treaty of peace.

II

Now this scene at Aphek—the men with the ropes about their necks standing before Ahab—finds a close parallel after more than two thousand years in one of the noblest passages in the history of our own country.

The town of Calais, in the north of France, was besieged in the year 1346, after the victory of Crécy, by King Edward III. of England. Inspired by the bravery of its governor, the citizens held out for a whole year, and then found themselves starved into surrender. Edward promised to extend mercy to the garrison and the townsmen on condition that twelve of the citizens gave themselves up to suffer capital punishment. The list of self-devoted men was soon made up; among them being the wealthiest and most honoured of the citizens. Eustache de St. Pierre, the noblest of them all, was the leader of the first six. These appeared before the king and his train of knights and lords, barefoot, in their shirts, and with halters round their necks. They knelt down before him, handed to him as conqueror the keys of the town and castle of Calais, and besought him—whatever he might do with themselves—to spare the rest of the people, who had already suffered so much during the siege. The king, however, was hard-hearted, and called for the executioner to cut off the heads of the six

citizens. Then all the English knights and barons prayed King Edward, with tears in their eyes, to have pity on these brave and good men; but he would not listen to them. In an angry tone he said again, "Call the headsman! They of Calais have made so many of my men die, that they must die themselves!"

But at the next moment Queen Philippa began to weep tenderly for pity; she cast herself on her knees before her lord the king, and besought him for the love of Christ to have mercy upon these devoted men. Then the king's heart began to soften a little, and soon he said to the queen, "Lady, I would rather you had been otherwhere; you pray so tenderly, that I dare not refuse you; and, though I do it against my will, nevertheless take the men, I give them to you." Then he took the six citizens by the ropes, and delivered them to Queen Philippa, and released from death everyone in Calais for the love of her; and the queen took off the halters, and bade her servants clothe the six burgesses, and told Eustache and the others to be happy.

Auguste Rodin, a famous French sculptor of the second half of the nineteenth century, executed some years ago for the town of Calais a noble piece of sculpture called "The Burgesses of Calais." It represents the citizens of whom I have spoken walking in file, giving up the keys of the town, and imploring mercy of the English king.

III

I have read in another book about some men who put ropes about their necks when they were in sorrow, and had to appear before a Prince. The book to which I refer is *The Holy War*, by John Bunyan. This work is a history of the human soul; the scene of the story is "a fair and delicate town, a corporation called Mansoul."

Bunyan tells how after the town of Mansoul had rebelled against the King of Heaven, and allowed the giant Diabolus to reign over it, Prince Emmanuel came from the court with a great army, and overcame Diabolus, and banished him from the place into a dry and salt land. The citizens were now afraid of the vengeance of the Conqueror for their rebellion against His royal Father. The Prince ordered them to assemble in the castle yard; and then and there, before their eyes, "my Lord Understanding, Mr. Conscience, and that notable one, the Lord Will-be-will" were arrested and put in prison. The citizens prayed for mercy, but Emmanuel was silent. By and by they drew out another petition and sent it to the Prince's pavilion outside the gate by the hands of Mr. Desires-Awake, who "went with a rope about his head, and pleaded nothing but mercy." The Prince took the petition from his hands, read it, and turned away for a while, and wept, but promised to give the petition

His consideration. After this, Mansoul drew up a third petition, containing a penitent confession of guilt and a humble crave for mercy. Desires-Awake presented it, again with the rope on his neck; and Mr. Wet-Eyes went with him, wringing his hands.

Even yet the Prince offered no comfort, but simply gave orders that the three notable prisoners—"the Mayor, the Recorder, and the Lord Will-be-will"—be brought out to Him into the camp next morning. Bunyan describes them marching through the streets in chains, closely guarded by a band of soldiers, with ropes on their necks, and beating their breasts as they walked. They prostrated themselves before Emmanuel, and repeated their humble confession. The Prince asked, "For what are those ropes on your heads?" The prisoners answered, "These ropes are to bind us withal, to the place of execution, if mercy be not pleasing in Thy sight."

But as soon as the Prince had heard the confession of the three men, and even while they stood trembling before Him, He announced a free pardon for them, and a general pardon for the town of Mansoul. He at once delivered them their pardons, written on parchment, and sealed with seven seals. He ordered them to be stripped of their mourning weeds, and clothed in shining garments; "He gave to each of the three

jewels of gold, and precious stones, and took away their ropes, and put chains of gold about their necks." A beautiful picture, all this, of God's mercy to the penitent!

How very terrible a thing is sin! It is so inconceivably dreadful that the Lord Jesus Christ required to suffer and die before it could be forgiven. It is such an awful evil that no sorrow over it can be too great or deep. But the message of the Gospel is, that for Jesus' sake the Lord pardons all those that truly repent and trust in the Redeemer. The Psalmist who wrote Psalm cxxx. wrote, so to speak, with a rope round his neck; he cried to the Lord "out of the depths," but the Lord heard him, and taught him to hope in His Word. The publican, who went up to the Temple to pray, had also a rope about his neck; but he went down to his house justified. And if we are like these men, and like the prodigal son in the other parable, in humbly confessing our guilt before God, He will take away the halters from us, and put on instead of them chains of gold.

XIV

Christ's Words Immortal

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."—MATT. xxiv. 35.

THIS great saying fell from the lips of the Lord Jesus Christ, and it has been reported by Mark and Luke, as well as by Matthew. The great Teacher had been discoursing to His disciples, as He sat on the Mount of Olives over against Jerusalem, about two subjects: the one, the coming destruction of the city; and the other, His own return at the Last Day to judge the world. The solemn saying of verse 35 refers to both of these prophecies. The one event is past: Jerusalem was destroyed by Titus and his army some forty years after Jesus had pronounced its doom. The other event is still future, and no one can forecast the date of the Day of Judgment; but this prediction is certain to be fulfilled too.

"Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away." What a bold statement this is! And yet with what perfect

confidence Jesus makes it! The audacity of the Speaker is sublime. Horace, the Latin poet, boasted, perhaps half in jest, about his own *Odes*, that they would outlive monuments of brass; but Jesus spoke the words before us in sober earnest. That He could conceive such a grand saying as this, and that He could dare to utter it in the circumstances in which He was then placed, shows that He is indeed God, and not Man only. For never did Jesus seem to be more alone, up to this hour of His life, than when He said these words. And never did it seem more unlikely that His words should stand. It was within three days after this that He was crucified as a criminal on Calvary. He spoke His discourse about the Last Things on Tuesday evening; Judas the traitor betrayed Him on Thursday night; and He was executed on Friday morning. But, although He died, the words which He spoke are immortal.

I

This Saying is true of Christ's Spoken Words.

I have said that it was evening when He uttered it. After telling the disciples that the beautiful Temple upon which they gazed was to be laid in ruins, and that by and by the world itself must be destroyed, Jesus looked up to the paling sky and the evening star, and then down

to the gorge of the Kedron, and around to the rugged and tumbling hills that guard Jerusalem, and said very sadly and earnestly, "Heaven and earth shall pass away, but My words shall not pass away."

Spoken words seem to be soon uttered and done with. As far as the hearing of them is concerned, they "pass away" at once and for ever. We may look upon them, indeed, as so much *breath*, and nothing more. On the other hand the arch of heaven appears solid and permanent, and we speak of the hills as everlasting. God "hath established the earth, and it abideth."

We know, however, that the heavens and the earth, which are now, shall pass away. At the Day of Doom the firmament shall depart "as a scroll when it is rolled together," and the stars shall fall like unripe figs in a tempest. But the words of Jesus shall never fail. The growth of knowledge since His time has not destroyed the value of a single one of them. What He says in this discourse, and in all His discourses, is immortal and eternal as the words of God. This is so because He Himself is God. Well, therefore, may we address our heavenly Prophet in the words of the Apostle Peter: "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life. And we believe and are sure that Thou art that Christ, the Son of the living God." That is,

there is but one Messiah, and Jesus of Nazareth is He.

> "A few unlettered sentences Christ gave
> Out of His purity. The years may bear
> Their unregretted learning to the grave—
> *His* words we cannot spare."

II

THIS SAYING IS TRUE OF CHRIST'S WRITTEN WORD.

We have that Word in the Scriptures of the New Testament. These are, as we read on the title-page of the volume, "The New Testament [or rather, Covenant] of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ." And indeed the whole Bible is His Word.

Now as we look back across the centuries of the Christian era, do we not see how durable and how enduring this Word is? The enemies of the Bible have in every age done their best to destroy it, but in vain. They have freely used the penknife and the fire, as King Jehoiakim once did with the roll of Jeremiah's prophecy; but God has always arranged, as He did then, that the writing should be quietly restored, just as it was before.

In the beginning of the fourth century, during one of the eleven Roman persecutions of the Christians, the Emperor Diocletian ordered every copy of the New Testament to be destroyed; but still the New Testament lives. Nearly an entire

edition of William Tyndale's English New Testament was bought up and burned at St. Paul's Churchyard in the year 1529; but still Christ's words have not passed away.

Voltaire, the French infidel, prophesied more than a century ago that in a hundred years the Bible would be a forgotten book. Had he spoken truly, the book-hunter of to-day would be coming upon an old copy now and again on some old book-stall, and the Book would be found nowhere else. But instead of this, the Holy Scriptures are at present being circulated in more than four hundred languages; and the same cannot be said of any other book. Also, wonderful to tell, the very house in which Voltaire wrote his prophecy actually came to be used as a depôt of the Bible Society.

In the year 1881, when the Revised Version of the New Testament was published, the Oxford University Press alone received orders in advance for more than a million copies; and in America the demand was equally great. At the present time, too, the great Bible Societies of Christendom issue every year some millions of Bibles, New Testaments, and smaller portions of the Divine Word.

What is the secret of the growing power of the Bible? The influence of most books is only temporary: how is it that this Book has within itself the power of an endless life? It is because

Christ Himself is in the Book, as He is in no other. In the Holy Scriptures we find the Son of God drawing near to sinful man to save him and bless him. Because of this there is an authority in the words of Christ, and a plan, and a depth and height, which no other words have. "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away: but the Word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the Word which by the Gospel is preached unto you."

"The moon of Mahomet
Arose, and it shall set:
While, blazoned as on heaven's immortal noon,
The Cross leads generations on."

XV

Where is the Holy City?

"The holy city."—MATT. iv. 5.

WILLIAM COWPER the poet has said, in *The Task*, that "God made the country, and man made the town." Abraham Cowley, another poet, who was also an essayist, wrote in the century before Cowper, in his essay *The Garden*, "God the first garden made, and the first city Cain." But Varro, one of the most learned of the Romans, who lived in the century before Christ, has a similar saying in one of his books: "God gave the fields, human art built cities."

These quotations give one the impression that the writers judged a country life to be better than life in a great town, and that they desire their readers to agree with them. Life in the country is more natural; it is more simple; it is perhaps more easily a virtuous life. City life is an artificial arrangement, and there are more temptations connected with it. In the same way there are those who have thought that one can best live as good Christians ought to do, by getting away

as far as possible from the crowd. Some are of opinion that it is best of all to live in a convent.

But this is a mistake. The history of most that is greatest in human life is connected with cities. The city is the blossom and fruit of the highest civilisation. The story of human progress is closely connected with cities, such as Babylon, Nineveh, Jerusalem, Athens, Rome, Alexandria, Venice, Florence, not to speak of modern ones. Jesus Christ, our Saviour, never lived a rural life. He was brought up from His infancy in a country town, and He lived all His public life in a crowd. His Gospel is not for the individual alone, but for society—for men in masses. And if the Bible begins with a garden, it ends with a garden-city, the City of God.

Up and down the Bible, here and there both in the Old Testament and the New, we find the words, "the holy city." We shall consider what city, if any, is entitled to be called by this name in the modern world. There is much variety of opinion on the subject.

I

"The Holy City": what city is it?

Ask a *Hindu*, and he will reply, "Benares, of course." Benares, in the north of India, on the left bank of the River Ganges, is the most sacred city of the ancient Hindu religion. It skirts the river for miles; and the high bank is lined all

the way with broad flights of landing-stairs (called *ghats*) which lead up to the temples and palaces. In the city there are upwards of 20,000 priests, and about 2000 temples or shrines; while the idols set up in it are said to number 500,000. For Benares is the headquarters of Hindu worship, and multitudes of pilgrims from all parts of India come to it every year to bathe in the sacred river. To die within the holy city of Benares is the height of Hindu desire, and to be buried there on the banks of the Ganges is believed to secure free entry to eternal bliss.

But how degraded is the Hindu worship! One of the temples is sacred to monkeys, and these creatures run loose all over it. Another is sacred to cows, and a large number of these animals are kept inside. To bathe in the Ganges, too, may make the body clean; but this can never wash the stains of sin from the soul. So it is not reasonable to call Benares "the holy city."

II

"THE HOLY CITY": WHAT CITY IS IT?

Ask a *Buddhist* from Tibet, and he will answer, "LHASA." Lhasa is the capital of Tibet, a country which lies between India and China; and it is also the sacred city of Buddhism. The name means "the Seat of the Gods," or "God's Ground." Lhasa contains many temples and palaces, and in the most sacred of them all there is a life-size

image of Buddha, the founder of the Buddhist religion. The gates of this city are closed against Europeans. Only three men from Europe trod its streets during the first half of the nineteenth century; and there were none after the year 1846, until in the beginning of the present century Captain Younghusband and his band of soldiers fought their way inside.

Buddhism is one of the great religions of the world. It has existed for 2400 years. It has more adherents than any other religion; and in the city of Lhasa the Grand Lama, the chief priest of Buddhism in Tibet, lives and reigns. The great palace of the Lama crowns a hill to the west of the city, and looks very imposing with its gilded domes and spires. In this old religion there are some good things, and also some other things that are not good. Buddhism, for example, teaches that human life is upon the whole miserable—a curse rather than a blessing; and that to obtain release from existence is the chief good. But this doctrine is not true, and so Lhasa cannot be "the holy city."

III

"The Holy City": what city is it?

Ask a *Mohammedan*, and he will answer "Mecca." Mecca is the capital of Arabia. It stands in a sandy valley some fifty-five miles from the eastern shore of the Red Sea. Here

Mohammed was born in 571 A.D.; and after his famous "Flight" from the city in 622 he came back to it in 629. Mecca is the capital city of the Mohammedan religion. In the view of nearly two hundred millions of our fellow-men it is the most sacred spot on earth. The Great Mosque of the Kaaba is there, and within it is the famous Black Stone which came down from heaven. To visit Mecca, to walk round the Kaaba, and to kiss the Black Stone, is looked upon as the greatest privilege and honour which one can have in this world. One of the four great religious duties of every devout Mohammedan is to make at least one pilgrimage to Mecca in the course of his life; which, however, may be done by sending a substitute. Almost the last act in the career of the "Prophet" Mohammed himself was to lead forty thousand pilgrims to that sacred city. The most splendid of the annual Moslem pilgrimages are those from Cairo and Damascus. The departure of the pilgrims from Cairo is the chief event of the year. But no person who is not a Moslem is permitted to enter Mecca. The city is carefully guarded from all eyes but those of the faithful. No "Giaour," that is, infidel, can enter but at the risk of his life.

Mohammedanism, however, take it all in all, has not been a blessing to the world. There are not a few heathen elements in it. It has shed much blood. It maintains slavery. It degrades woman-

hood. And it dishonours the Lord Jesus Christ, who is the true Prophet of God, and the Redeemer of men. Therefore we cannot regard Mecca as "the holy city."

IV

"THE HOLY CITY": WHAT CITY IS IT?

Ask a *Roman Catholic*, and his reply will be, "ROME." Rome, he will say, is the metropolis of the Christian Church. It is the Eternal City. It is more closely connected with the history of human progress than any other city on the globe, and it has also been the centre of the history of the Church. The Roman Catholic will assure us that St. Peter, the first of the long line of Popes, was Bishop of Rome, suffered martyrdom there, and was buried there. His tomb is immediately under the great dome of the Cathedral built in his honour on the Vatican Hill. Rome, too, must be "the holy city," because "His Holiness the Pope," who is the representative on earth of the Lord Jesus Christ, lives there. And the Pope, we are told, is infallible. Whatever he declares while he sits in the Chair of St. Peter is the very Word of Jesus Christ.

But the claims of the Pope do not impress us. Or rather, they impress us in a way unfavourable to his claims. In the papal system there is much of the counterfeit, and not a little that is blasphemous. Popery carefully copies the forms

of Christianity, while setting aside many of its realities. So we decline to look upon Rome as "the holy city."

V

"THE HOLY CITY": WHAT CITY IS IT?

Ask a *Jew*, and he will answer, "JERUSALEM." He will remind us that Palestine is the Holy Land, and that Jerusalem is its chief city. Perhaps he may say also that he regards four of the cities of that land as sacred,—namely, Jerusalem, Hebron, Tiberias, and Safed; but that Jerusalem is the most sacred of them all.

This city, so ancient and so renowned, is called "the holy city" both in the Old Testament and in the New. Matthew calls it so here in describing our Lord's temptation, and he names it so again near the end of his Gospel. The Arab name of Jerusalem is *El-Kuds esh-Sherif*, which means, "The Holy, the Noble"; or, shortly, *El-Kuds*, that is, "The Holy." It was on the site of the future city that, at God's command, Abraham offered up his son Isaac as a sacrifice. It was there that Solomon built the Hebrew Temple. It was to that city that God sent His servants the prophets to instruct and warn His people. Jerusalem is the city of God, in which He promised to dwell, and to make His rest for ever. Many Jews in our time, when they become old, go to Jerusalem that they may end their days

there, and be buried in the Valley of Jehoshaphat, close to the city.

Now, we admit, of course, that Jerusalem was "the holy city" in Old Testament times. But it has fallen from its high position. For it killed the prophets, and stoned them that were sent to it. It murdered Jesus Christ, who is the Son of God, and the Messiah of the Jews. So God deserted it, withdrew His protection from it, and allowed it to be destroyed. Indeed Jerusalem has been besieged and captured some twenty times during the course of the last three thousand years, and several times the city has been quite overthrown. One Jerusalem has been built upon the top of another, and often has it lain desolate.

Where then is "the Holy City" to be found, if it is not Benares, nor Lhasa, nor Mecca, nor Rome, nor Jerusalem? Is there any such city now at all? The answer is, that the Christian religion knows no holy places outside of the hearts of God's people, within whom His Spirit dwells. Neither at Jerusalem nor on Mount Gerizim do men get specially near to God. The true worshippers worship the Father in spirit and in truth.

The true "Holy City" is in the unseen and in the future. We walk by faith in regard to it, and many godly men have dreamed about it. But the Bible tells us that it has actually been seen, at least twice, in visions of it which God has graciously

given. One of these visions is recorded in the Old Testament, and the other in the New Testament.

The one was granted to Ezekiel the Prophet, when he was in exile beside the rivers of Babylon. In the last nine chapters of his Book he describes minutely his vision of the future Temple and City. The dimensions which he gives to the latter are as great as the whole of the land of Canaan between the Great Sea and the Jordan. And he says that the City shall be named Jehovah-Shammah, which means, "The Lord is there."

The other vision was given to John the Apostle during his exile in the island of Patmos. He, like Ezekiel, saw from "a great and high mountain" the Holy Jerusalem in splendour "descending out of heaven from God." It had within it the glory of God, and all its social life was pure and clean. That city shall be a paradise of obedience to the Divine will. There God's people shall openly serve Him, and shall shine in His light. That is, John was privileged to see, beyond the times of the present Church of God, those of the latter-day glory. The historical Christian Church is preparing for the manifestation by and by of the real "Holy City." When the saints shall reign on the earth, and the wicked city Babylon shall fall, and the people shall be all righteous, then at last shall be seen on the earth New Jerusalem, "the Holy City."

XVI

"Ready, Aye Ready"

"Be ready to every good work."—TIT. iii. 1.

I

LORD CLIFFORD, one of the peers of England, has this motto on his coat of arms, "*Semper paratus*," that is, "Always prepared." Earl Clanwilliam has the same motto; not in Latin, however, but in French, "*Toujours prêt*." The latter is also the motto of the Scottish Carmichaels, while that of the Border Johnstons was "Aye ready." That of the great Lord Lawrence was "Be ready"—surely an excellent motto for a soldier. And a Scottish peer, Lord Napier of Merchiston, has one very similar,—the one which I have set down as the title of this address,—"Ready, aye Ready."

The origin of Lord Napier's motto forms part of Scottish history. The family of Napier is descended from that of Scott of Thirlestane, near Selkirk; and in the year 1542 Sir John Scott received permission from King James V. of

Scotland to use the words, "Ready, aye Ready," as his family motto. The royal warrant was given at Falamuir, in Midlothian, to which place James had summoned his nobles for the purpose of invading England. The king found, however, to his great disappointment, that none of the self-willed barons or gentry were prepared to follow him, with the one exception of Sir John Scott of Thirlestane. Sir John had come to the rendezvous at Soutra Hill with seventy mounted lancers, and said that he and they were quite ready to follow the king at once across the Border. King James, to mark his satisfaction with Sir John's loyalty, granted him the right to add a sheaf of spears to his coat of arms, together with the motto, "Ready, aye Ready."

Here are the very words of the royal warrant: "We, considering the faith and good service of our right traist friend, John Scott, of Thirlestane, who came to our host at Soutra Edge with seventy launciers on horseback of his friends and followers, and being willing to go with us to England, when all our nobles and others refused, he was ready to stake all at our bidding, for which cause it is our will, and we do strictly charge and command our lion herald, and his deputies, to give and grant to the said John Scott a border of *fleur-de-lis* about his coat of arms, such as in our royal banner, and also a bundle of lances above his helmet, with the words READDY, AY READDY, and that he and all

his after comers may enjoy the same as a pledge and token of our good will and kindness for his true worthiness. Given at Falamuir, Oct. 1542."

Sir Walter Scott refers to the story in *The Lay of the Last Minstrel*, as follows—

> "Hence, in fair remembrance worn,
> Yon sheaf of spears his crest has borne;
> Hence, his high motto stands revealed,
> 'Ready, aye Ready,' for the field."

II

Now, the words, "Ready, aye Ready," have in them an excellent lesson for every Christian man and woman, and boy and girl. It is a grand thing if it can be said of any one that he is always thoughtful, always alert, always on the watch to make the most of his opportunities. But it is dreadful if the opposite has to be said of any person, when his life is summed up after it has come to an end. Yet so it is that one of the early Saxon kings of England has this particular black mark attached to his name in history. He is known as "Ethelred the Unready," because he was always unprepared in counsel, because he constantly misdirected his energies, and because he was listless and fond of ease. What a blot this is on a royal name! What a blemish upon a man's character! What an undesirable immortality!

One way of being "always ready" is to be

punctual in keeping one's engagements. Queen Victoria, for example, was so during all the years of her prolonged reign: she acted on the principle that "punctuality is the politeness of kings." If I have promised to meet a friend at a certain place at two o'clock, I should not be seen sauntering to the spot at ten minutes after the hour. On every well-managed railway a train that is advertised to start at one o'clock goes off at that hour, and not at five minutes past one. And in every well-conducted congregation, if the hour of service is eleven o'clock, public worship will begin then, and not at five minutes past eleven. Of course a few unready worshippers will come in two or three minutes late; but if the service began at five minutes past eleven, that would not fetch them. The same people would then appear in church at seven or eight minutes after the hour.

An important duty which school children have on five days of every week is the preparation of their school-lessons. Those boys and girls are to be praised who are always ready, when called upon in school, to repeat their lessons, or to perform their other tasks. This habit is an excellent preparation for the work of life when they have become men and women. The grace of readiness helps us to put to the best use the talents which we possess.

I read some time ago this incident about a young man who was beginning life as a clerk.

One day his master said to him, "To-morrow morning that cargo of cotton must be got out and weighed, and we must have a regular account of it." The young man had never before been intrusted with this kind of work, but he was industrious and full of energy. So he made his arrangements in the evening, and instructed the labourers to be forward at five o'clock next morning. They set to work, and the thing was finished before the breakfast hour. Shortly after ten o'clock the master came in, and found the young man sitting in the counting-house. His countenance fell when he saw him, for he supposed that his directions of the previous day had not been complied with. "Did I not instruct you," he said, "to get out that cargo this morning?" "It is done, sir," said the clerk, "and here is the account of it." This one act showed that young man's character. It gave his employer firm confidence in him. It led to his promotion. And it made his fortune.

III

The Man Christ Jesus is our Pattern, and we know that He was always "ready to every good work." The late Bishop of London, Dr. Creighton, was fond of using the word "alert," and that word means "always ready." Now this is what Jesus Christ was. He "went about doing good." He said, "I must work the works of Him that sent

Me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work." How swift He was on all occasions to help the afflicted and the distressed! When Jairus, the ruler of the synagogue, begged Him to come to his house and heal his daughter, Jesus at once "arose and followed him." When the centurion told Him of the sickness of his servant, Jesus said, "I will come and heal him." One night, during a storm on the Lake of Galilee, when the disciples were "distressed in rowing," He actually came to succour them "walking on the sea." The Saviour is "a very present help in trouble."

It is right to look to Him to aid us in our times of distress, but we ought also to take Him as our model in all duty. He was always ready, and so should His people be. Especially as regards the highest and most solemn things, we should seek to be prepared. He wants us to be ready for death, ready for judgment, ready for heaven, ready for His second coming. It is the five virgins in our Lord's parable who were ready that are called "wise." They had brought not only their lighted lamps, but also their oil-cans containing a reserve supply of oil. And it was they who went in with the Bridegroom to the marriage.

XVII

Trumpets—Bells

"And the LORD spake unto Moses, saying, Make thee two trumpets of silver; of a whole piece shalt thou make them: that thou mayest use them for the calling of the assembly, and for the journeying of the camps."—NUM. x. 1, 2.

I

THESE trumpets were used as the means of making a public call of the Hebrew people. They summoned the congregation to the sanctuary to worship; they gave command to the camps to march; they sounded when the tribes were about to go to war; and at the great feasts their music cheered the worshippers who stood around the bleeding sacrifices.

Each of these two trumpets was a long, straight tube of silver, with a bell-shaped mouth. Josephus, the Jewish historian, writes: 'Moses was the inventor of the form of their trumpet, which was made of silver." And we see what that form was from the bas-relief on the triumphal Arch of Titus in Rome, where it is sculptured along with the lampstand of the Temple, and the

table of shewbread. It was straight, long, and narrow, and ended like a bell.

The Israelites had also another kind of trumpet. This was the cornet, which at the first was made of ram's horn, but afterwards of other material. The word "cornet" comes from the Latin *cornu*, a horn. The ram's horn gave a loud, piercing sound, like the note of a bugle or clarion. It was of limited compass, and therefore of no service in concert music. It was used to call the people to attention, to make signals for war, and to proclaim the year of jubilee. This musical instrument is still used in the Jewish synagogues.

The silver trumpets were blown by the priests, the sons of Aaron, alone. The Levites were taught to sing and play in the daily service, but the priests were not; therefore the priests used these simpler instruments. And the promise was that, when the trumpets were blown, the people would be graciously remembered before the Lord their God (ver. 10).

In one of our hymns for the Lord's Day—a hymn which is a favourite with many Christian people—the "trumpets" which summoned the Old Testament Church to worship are spoken of:

> "To-day on weary nations
> The heavenly manna falls;
> To holy convocations
> The silver trumpet calls."

These lines are in a New Testament hymn, written

in the nineteenth century; but, although we appreciate the reference, we never in modern times summon the people to worship with the blare of cornets or the shrill blast of the clarion. The Christian Church uses instead the pealing of bells.

II

We do not read of bells at all in the New Testament; and in the Old Testament they are only mentioned twice, the reference in both cases being to small tinkling bells. Little golden bells were fastened to the bottom of the high priest's robe, that he might be heard when he was moving about within the holy place. Bells were also attached to the bridles, or hung around the necks of war-horses.

It is not known when large bells first began to be used in connection with Christian Churches. Probably they came from the Far East; for both in China and India they were employed in heathen worship. The Bishop of Rome, at that time swelling out to become the Pope, enjoined the use of large bells in the year 604, and the practice soon became general. Indeed, it may be said to have become universal as a Christian custom; for the Mohammedans, when their religion arose in the seventh century, took care to avoid the introduction of bells, as reminding them too much of the religion of Jesus. What they do is to send an

ecclesiastical crier, called the muezzin, to the top of the minaret of the mosque, to summon the people to prayer with his voice.

For centuries before the Protestant Reformation church bells were looked upon as sacred. When a new bell was hung up in a church tower, it was baptized and blessed, and it had its baptismal name engraven upon it. It was believed thereby to receive power to chase away demons, to calm storms, and to put out fires. Some of the old church bells had this Latin motto on them—

> "Funera plango.
> Fulgura frango.
> Sabbata pango.
> Excito lentos.
> Dissipo ventos.
> Paco cruentos."

This, being interpreted, is: "I toll the funerals; I break the lightnings; I announce the Sabbath; I rouse the slow; I disperse the winds; I pacify the cruel."

Although during the Dark Ages some superstitions became connected with church bells, the Protestant Reformers did not discourage the use of them. They have continued until the present time to call the Lord's people to public worship. And while it is true that clocks and watches are universal now in the twentieth century, it is well that the impressive voices of the bells should still be heard on the Sacred Day.

Especially in quiet rural districts is the church bell beautiful.

> "Solemn the knell, from yonder ancient pile,
> Fills all the air, inspiring joyful awe."

It comes from the belfry of the plain country church, set in its green graveyard, with the waving of trees near its windows, and the murmur of innumerable bees; with its high square pews, its simple praise, and its summer drowsiness. The poet Cowper makes the shipwrecked and lonely Alexander Selkirk, who was Robinson Crusoe in real life, say about his desert island:

> "The sound of the church-going bell
> Those valleys and rocks never heard,
> Ne'er sighed at the sound of a knell,
> Or smiled when a Sabbath appeared."

The ringing of the Sabbath bells should lead us to think of our religious privileges—the privilege of public worship, and that of Gospel preaching. We should love to hear them because of the holy thoughts which they suggest; and we know that God also is pleased with the sweet sound. He is delighted to be in the midst of His people when they come together to worship Him.

Of course there is no worship in the sound of the bells, any more than there is in the opening voluntary which is played by the organist. But the bells may enliven our spirits when we are on our way to church, and the voluntary may have a soothing influence upon us when we sit down in it.

And so both may help to prepare us to worship. Like the silver trumpets which were blown by the Hebrew priests, the bells may be "for a memorial before God"—reminding Him of His gracious promise to meet with His people, and bless them.

XVIII

The Carcase and the Vultures

"Wheresoever the carcase is, there will the eagles be gathered together."—MATT. xxiv. 28.

I

THE Revised Version puts "vultures" in the margin. But we are not to think of the Egyptian vulture, which, although a beautiful bird, is filthy and repulsive in its choice of food. The latter indeed is called "Pharaoh's hen," and is used in Egypt as an emblem of the love of parents for their children. Otherwise, however, it is a gross and ignoble creature.

The bird here referred to is the griffon, or great vulture. Although not an eagle, it is a lordly and noble animal, at once as regards its size, its stately bearing, its swiftness of flight, and the lonely pinnacles which it chooses for its eyrie. The griffon is indeed a majestic bird, larger than any eagle, and very common throughout Palestine. It does not kill its food, but devours fresh carcases, as all the eagles also prefer to do. It has been

known to live in captivity for more than a hundred years.

In the cities and towns of the East dogs are the scavengers, and the streets are full of them. They are masterless dogs, and live in bands, each band occupying its own district. But the scavengers of the country are vultures and ravens. These carrion-eating creatures do not require to have an inspector of cleansing placed over them. They find their prey without difficulty, and do their work speedily and thoroughly.

The griffon vultures are always on the look-out, both upon the valley and the mountain. They fly at an immense height, and have very keen vision in pursuit of their prey. Perhaps there is not a spot of ground in the whole of the East which during daylight is not watched by one or more of these birds. As soon as a camel or other beast of burden drops dead, and the caravan to which it belonged leaves it lying behind in the desert, the vultures begin to gather from all quarters, although the traveller may not have noticed a single one flying about before. Perhaps only one griffon has at first seen the carcase, and, after wheeling in a rapid downward flight, swooped down upon it. But a second, at a greater distance, has observed his neighbour's movements, and followed his course. A third, still farther away, follows the flight of the second. A fourth traces the third; and still others,—griffons, Egyptian

vultures, eagles, kites, buzzards, and ravens,—as long as a morsel of the carcase remains to be devoured.

During the siege of Sebastopol in the Crimea in 1854–55, vast numbers of the griffon vulture were collected in that peninsula, although before the Russian War broke out the bird had scarcely been known there. And they remained congregated near the camp until the close of the campaign, when they returned home to the regions from which they had come—the Balkans, the Caucasus, and Asia Minor. The fact is a notable illustration of the truth of our Lord's saying in our text; as also of the words in the Book of Job, "Where the slain are, there is she."

II

It is not pleasant to think of vultures, and of the work which they have got to do in the world; but the Lord Jesus found it necessary here to use this illustration. Dark things have their good uses. The removal of carrion by ravenous beasts and birds helps to sweeten the air and promote health. So also there is sometimes scavenger work of a like kind to do in the world of mankind. When a city or a nation becomes morally dead and corrupt, there are vultures which God will send to devour it. As soon as He forsakes it, the place will become a quarry for birds of prey.

What Jesus here says to His disciples is, that

the wicked city Jerusalem, which has rejected Him, and is now about to crucify Him, will soon become like a decaying carcase exposed in the field, and inviting the Roman armies to come down upon it and lay it waste. Fourteen hundred years before this, Moses the Lawgiver had earnestly warned the Israelites, before they crossed the Jordan to take possession of the Promised Land, that if they should be unfaithful to Him He would "bring a nation against them from far, from the end of the earth, as the eagle flieth." This threatening was fulfilled for the first time in the destruction of Jerusalem by the armies of Nebuchadnezzar; and by and by it was fulfilled again in the siege and ruin of the city by the Romans under Titus. The Romans especially came "from far"; the imperial army which invaded Judea being brought from France, Spain, and Britain—then looked upon as "the end of the earth." Curiously, too, the emblem on the standards of the Roman army was an eagle, as it was also on many Roman coins. Little more than a generation after our Lord's ascension the eagles gathered to their prey on the hills round about Jerusalem. And in the year 70 the beat of their avenging wings was heard as they flew victorious to the summit of the citadel of Zion. The vultures devoured Jerusalem. More than a million Jews perished in the siege of the city, and other ninety-seven thousand were taken captive.

III

Probably our Lord's words about the carcase and the vultures were a kind of proverb in common use. The proverb meant that it is a law of nature —that is, a law of God—that a prolonged career of sin and crime at last brings death, corruption, and punishment. The history of the nations is full of examples of this.

Ancient Babylon, for example, was in its day "the praise of the whole earth," and "the glory of kingdoms, the beauty of the Chaldees' excellency." By reason of its size, splendour, riches, luxury, art, and science, that great city was the centre of Western Asia. But, alas! it was also the seat of boundless idolatry, debauchery, and vice. So it became by and by a putrid carcase, and Cyrus and the Persians were the vultures that devoured it. The Prophet Isaiah describes Cyrus as "a ravenous bird from the East,"—that is, a Persian bird of prey, of irresistible force, whose fell swoop was appointed to do God's work of judgment. The figure of a griffon, too, was the royal ensign of Persia.

Imperial Rome, in like manner, became bloated with prosperity, and enfeebled with vicious luxury. The strength of its inner life was thus eaten away, and it became a mere carcase of decaying flesh. So the Lord sent three great vultures to destroy it—Alaric the Goth, Attila the Hun, and Genseric the Vandal. The hardy German tribes from the

forests of the north battened on the dead city, and laid it waste.

And there are to be wider and heavier judgments over the whole world, previous to the Second Coming of Christ. Before the Last Day arrives, there will be much opposition to Him and His kingdom on the part of kings and nations. In the Book of Revelation we read of a great battle in which these wicked peoples shall be overthrown, after which the screaming vultures shall assemble for a ghastly feast. Then the evil and corrupt portion of mankind shall receive its final doom; and this shall take place over the earth's whole area. God's judgments, like vultures, will gather together from every place, and consume the offensive carcases; and all the birds will be filled with their flesh. To those who do not love the Lord Jesus Christ, the Last Day will be a "Day of wrath." He "will by no means clear the guilty." And because that is so, there is room and need, in God's government of the world to-day, not only for the lamb but also for the wolf, not only for the turtle-dove but also for the vulture.

XIX

The Desolation of Jerusalem

"Behold, your house is left unto you desolate."—MATT. xxiii. 38.

OUR Saviour spoke these words about Jerusalem and its Temple when He left the Temple for the last time on the Tuesday before He was crucified. They began to be fulfilled when the city was besieged and destroyed by the Romans in the year 70; and the desolation has continued until the present day. The natural situation of Jerusalem is of course as beautiful as ever; and so is the view of the city from the Mount of Olives. But to a thoughtful Christian mind the city appears to be "desolate," especially in contrast with its glorious past. For, instead of being a Christian city, it is a home of superstition.

I

When I was in Jerusalem in the month of March a year or two ago, I went up on the Sabbath evening to the flat roof of our hotel, to see and hear the muezzins calling the faithful Mos-

lems to prayer from the minarets of the mosques. A mosque, the boys and girls know, is a Mohammedan place of worship. It is usually a square building, with a dome; and instead of a spire, it has one or more minarets.

A minaret is a lofty and slender turret, rising by different storeys, and surrounded by one or more projecting balconies. There are no bells in the minaret, as there are in our steeples, to summon the people to worship. That is done by a Moslem official, called the muezzin. An ecclesiastical crier of this kind is one of the officials of each mosque; and he goes up to near the dizzy top of the minaret five times every day, to call the people to prayer. The five times are, at sunrise, at noon, at four o'clock in the afternoon, at sunset, and at nightfall. The muezzin is chosen for his strong, clear voice; and, other things being equal, the post is often intrusted to a blind man, that as he ascends the lofty minaret, and as he comes down again, he may not see what the people are doing in the houses that may be near the mosque.

Shortly after six o'clock on that Sabbath evening I saw and heard the three muezzins of three different mosques. There they were, as the sun was setting, standing out against the clear sky, tall, long-bearded men, each with head thrown back, arms lifted up, and mouth wide open, proclaiming the hour of prayer. It was an

interesting, romantic sight, especially as one had not seen it before.

Yet the view of these mosques and their muezzins reminds us that the city of Jerusalem is still lying "desolate." The mosques are shrines of the false prophet. The once Holy City is in the hands of a Mohammedan power, the semi-barbarous Turkish Government. And on the top of Mount Moriah, long ago the site of the Temple of the Jews, there now stands that dark centre of Moslem superstition, the Mosque of Omar. Yonder huge mass of native rock, right over which the dome of the mosque is built, is simply the highest point of Moriah. It is one of the most ancient of the sacred spots of history. For two thousand years or more it was the Altar of God. Here it was that Abraham prepared to sacrifice Isaac his son as a burnt-offering. Here stood the threshing-floor of Araunah the Jebusite, where King David interceded for the plague-stricken people. The Holy of Holies of the three Hebrew temples—Solomon's, Zerubbabel's, and Herod's—cannot have been far from this spot. Yet the Holy Rock has been for many hundreds of years in the possession of the Turks; and on the very summit of the lofty dome is the gilded crescent which is the sign of Ottoman rule. It is also a very sad story which tells of the supplanting of the Cross by the Crescent.

II

But there is another great building in Jerusalem which suggests to the mind the desolation of the city; and quite as much as the beautiful Mosque of Omar does. That other building, sad to say, is called a Christian church. It is the famous Church of the Holy Sepulchre. To every simple, Bible-loving, Protestant mind the place is little more than a centre of benighted Christian superstition, less unworthy of the dark Middle Ages than of the twentieth century.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre is the most celebrated building—or, rather, series of buildings—in Jerusalem. It is so because for nearly sixteen hundred years there has been a tradition that this great church stands over both the grave of Christ and the little hill of Golgotha where He was crucified.

The immense structure embraces, under one huge roof, several churches, chapels, shrines, and other holy places, which are owned respectively by the Greeks, Latins (that is, Roman Catholics), Armenians, Syrians, Copts, Abyssinians, and perhaps one or two other Christian bodies. Amongst these, it must be said, harmony does not always prevail. The rival sects do not always dwell together in unity. At the entrance to the church a number of armed Turkish soldiers are always stationed; and on special occasions, such

as Easter, when the place is crowded with pilgrims, a strong military guard is present, to preserve the peace, if need be, among the rival sects. What a pitiful idea of the Christian religion must this give to the unbelieving Moslems!

More than this, the Church of the Holy Sepulchre is full of the apparatus of idolatry. There are altars, lamps, candles, incense, images, pictures, relics; with these are associated superstitious myths and legends, unblushing frauds, and the kissing of "holy places"; while the furnishings of the great block of buildings—the gold and marble and the upholstery—are both tawdry and childish. The whole thing is little better than a big religious show, overlaid by priestcraft with fictions. In the words of Dr. Andrew Bonar: "The whole, from floor to dome, is one gorgeous imposture. There is here nothing real, nothing genuine. It is out and out an ecclesiastical hoax."

Even the Mosque of Omar is in some respects not so sad a sight. For the Mohammedans are careful to keep the Second Commandment as well as the First. The chief article in their creed is that "there is no God but God," and they do not allow themselves to forget that "God is a Spirit." As regards their mode of worship, they are strict Puritans. The mosque is lofty, roomy, and empty of furniture. There are in it no dolls, no pictures, no candles; only a slab in the wall which shows

the direction of Mecca, and a very high pulpit, for Mohammedanism depends much on earnest preaching.

But of course the great sin of Islam is that it denies the deity of Jesus Christ, and gives Him as a Prophet a place inferior to Mohammed. And so both the Mosque of Omar and the Church of the Holy Sepulchre show to-day that Jerusalem is still lying "desolate."

Surely this will not be for ever. The Turks themselves are by no means confident that the present state of matters at Jerusalem will for very long continue. They are careful to keep the Golden Gate in the eastern wall of the city sealed and built up, because there is a Moslem tradition that the day is coming when a victorious Christian soldier will enter by this gate and take Jerusalem from the Turks. Should that event occur, the Temple Area, into which the Golden Gate opens, will be soon thereafter filled with the rejoicing hymns of Christian congregations, and the Dome of the Rock will resound with praises of the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God. God in His goodness grant that it may be so! It will be a blessed time when Mohammedan delusion and Romish superstition shall disappear from the sacred land which was the cradle of the Christian faith; and when Jerusalem, once the Holy City, shall be no more "desolate."

XX

Prison Light

"A light shined in the prison."—ACTS xii. 7.

IT was a celestial radiance that suddenly blazed in the cell within which Peter lay bound. The light was due to the presence of the angel who came with "the glory of the Lord." It shone out from his person. What a change this heavenly illumination would make! What a contrast to the natural gloom of the dungeon! Yet it often happens, when a godly man or a godly woman is cast into any kind of prison, that even the dark gaol itself seems to be filled with the light of God; for that blessed light glows within the prisoner's soul.

I

We find it so with the godly prisoners who are spoken of in the Bible.

Joseph, whom his wicked brothers sold as a slave into Egypt, was sent to prison there for no reason except his innocency. He was the victim of a cruel slander. But he became a type and a pattern of

all those who endure such an injustice bravely and gently, because they have learned that it is God's will that they should suffer it. The light of a good conscience shone in Joseph's heart. Because the Lord was with him, his presence in the gaol was like sunshine. He gradually became like a king in the place, as he rose in favour with the governor of the prison, and gained the affection of his fellow-prisoners.

It was when Ezekiel the priest was among the Hebrew captives on the banks of the Chebar, one of the canals of Babylon, that the glory of the Lord burst upon him in all its splendour. He saw in his exile "visions of God": the Shechinah, the cherubim, the bright cloud, the sapphire throne, the burning ones which surrounded it, and the form of the Man in the midst.

Daniel the prophet was cast into a den of lions, because he refused to own the authority of the king in religious matters, and would not cease to pray and give thanks to God within his own chamber. But in this dreadful situation the Angel of the Covenant became his companion, thus bringing the light of joy into his soul; and the wild beasts were restrained from hurting him, if they did not lie down quietly at his feet.

Paul and Silas were treated with great cruelty and injustice by the magistrates of Philippi. They were thrust into the loathsome recesses of the inner prison, their backs torn and bleeding after

being scourged with rods; and their feet were secured in the stocks or the pillory. But the Lord gave them "songs in the night." Having a good conscience, and before they knew that an earthquake would bring them release, they found solace in praying and singing hymns.

The Apostle Paul wrote five of his Epistles when he was "a prisoner of Jesus Christ" at Rome; and the last of the five, the Second Epistle to Timothy, was probably written in the dungeon of the Mamertine, where he would sit in chains on the rocky floor night and day. Yet we know that the light of an unquenchable hope burned always and steadily in his great heart; for he knew that there was laid up for him a crown of righteousness.

So, too, was it with John the Evangelist, when he was in his island prison, the rocky and lonely Patmos. The cave there in which he dwelt was lighted up one Lord's Day with the glory of the exalted Redeemer; whose "eyes were as a flame of fire," "and His countenance as the sun shining in its strength," while "He had in His right hand seven stars." And what a light blazed in the prison, as there was enacted before the Seer the drama of the world! Seven churches were addressed; seven seals were broken; seven trumpets were blown; seven bowls of wrath were poured out; the adversaries were exposed and destroyed; and, at the end of all, the New

Jerusalem was seen coming down from God out of heaven, having the glory of God.

II

We can also see a light shining in other prison cells, long after all the Books of the New Testament had been written, and all the apostles had passed away.

There was, for example, during one of the fierce Roman persecutions of the Church, the young matron Perpetua, only twenty-two years of age, who was thrown into prison at Carthage for no other reason than that she had become a Christian. Her little infant was taken from her, and she was cast into a dark and crowded dungeon, among a number of ordinary criminals. There was no light in Perpetua's heart until one day when her baby was restored to her, and she and her fellow-Christian prisoners were put into an apartment by themselves; then, as she said, "the dungeon became a palace."

King James I. of Scotland, our poet king, who lived five hundred years ago, in the beginning of the fifteenth century, was detained as a prisoner at Windsor for the long period of eighteen years —that is, from 1406 till 1424. But one day in the beginning of summer, as he looked from his latticed window upon the garden below, his eye fell upon what he thought was the fairest and freshest of all the flowers of May. This was the

Lady Jane Beaufort, who was walking in the garden to enjoy the bright May morning. The Scottish prince fell in love with her; he called her his "milk-white dove"; and when at length he was set free from his captivity, and went home to his kingdom in the north, Lady Jane became his queen. The lines of the poet Lovelace speak truth, which say:

> "Stone walls do not a prison make,
> Nor iron bars a cage;
> Minds innocent and quiet take
> That for an hermitage:
> If I have freedom in my love,
> And in my soul am free,
> Angels alone that soar above
> Enjoy such liberty."

A bright light also shone oftentimes in the cells of many of the martyrs of the Protestant Reformation, both in England and Scotland. Among these were such noble women and men as Anne Askew, Lady Jane Grey, William Tyndale, and John Welsh. Even amidst the gloomiest trials the Reformers and the Covenanters found that the Lord was their light and their salvation. When John Welsh and his fellow-captives—a band of faithful witnesses for Christ—were lying in the dungeons of Blackness Castle, on the Firth of Forth, the dungeons being deep down below the level of the sea, Lady Melville of Culross sent them a letter in which she bade them be thankfnl that they were only "in the darkness of Blackness, and not in the blackness of darkness."

The boys and girls, too, know about John Bunyan. Again and again he was a prisoner of Jesus Christ. But his cell in Bedford Gaol was filled with light. There shone within it the light of genius—"the light that never was on sea or land." Better still, there shone within it also the illumination of God's Holy Spirit. Bunyan saw there, brightly shining through the gloom, all *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and heard the ringing of the joy-bells of the New Jerusalem. He found in his prison-cell the antechamber of heaven.

Many ordinary people also, men and women of all sorts and conditions, are prisoners of affliction. They "sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, being bound in affliction and iron." Some are confined to bed for years and years with disease; others have deep-seated family trials; others still are grieved and bowed down with sorrow because of their sins. But the words of the Psalm are fulfilled in them: "Then they cried unto the Lord in their trouble, and He saved them out of their distresses. He brought them out of darkness and the shadow of death, and brake their bands in sunder." How many chambers of sore suffering have been, in God's mercy, suddenly lit up with the light of gospel truth and grace!

What a radiance immediately shone in the dungeon of Doubting Castle, where Christian and Hopeful had lain in misery for two or three days, when Christian suddenly remembered

that he had a key in his bosom called Promise, that would open any lock in the whole place!

"Sometimes a light surprises
The Christian while he sings;
It is the Lord who rises
With healing in His wings:
When comforts are declining
He grants the soul again
A season of clear shining
To cheer it after rain."

XXI

Angel Help

"Then said they, It is his angel."—ACTS xii. 15.

IT was the good people who had been praying all night for the Apostle Peter in Mary's house that said these words. They thought that the apostle was in prison, and that he was going to die a martyr's death to-morrow. Stone walls, iron chains, sharp swords, and a strong guard of soldiers, kept him safely. But the Church had continued to pray for Peter, and the Lord heard His people's request, and set the prisoner free. Peter went at once in the night to the house of his friend Mary. When he knocked at the outer gate, the maid-servant Rhoda went to answer the knock; and, recognising Peter's voice, she did not open the gate, but rushed back excitedly into the house, her head turned with joy, crying out, "Peter is knocking at the door; it is Peter himself." But those within would not believe Rhoda. At first they told the girl that she was "mad." Then, when she kept on saying that she was sure it was Peter, they said, "Rhoda must be mistaken; it

cannot be Peter, for he is in gaol; it must be his angel." The praying company, though they had been crying to God night and day, could not believe that the Lord had answered their request.

I

A great deal is said in the Bible about *angels*. The word "angel" means *messenger*. There are both good and evil angels: "angels of light" and of darkness. The holy angels are angels of God, by whom He makes known His will and fulfils His purposes. They stand around His throne, and do Him homage. They also go upon His errands, and perform all His pleasure. The angels are more highly exalted in their nature than mankind are; but they take a deep interest in the human race. In Bible times God often used them to convey messages to His people; and He sends them still to protect good men and women, and also little children, from danger. One of the Psalmists says, "He shall give His angels charge over thee, to keep thee in all thy ways. They shall bear thee up in their hands, lest thou dash thy foot against a stone." That is, the holy angels are guardian angels.

The heavenly beings who showed themselves to men, whether in Old or New Testament times, had a manlike appearance. They bore the human form. They looked like beautiful young men, and they were often clothed in shining garments. The

painters usually give an angel a pair of huge strong wings; and certainly we read in Scripture of the seraphim having each three pairs of pinions. But there is no warrant in the Bible for representing those angels as having wings who appeared on the earth as the bearers of messages to mankind. Abraham at first thought it was three men who stood by him in his tent door, and became his guests under the tree. The wife of Manoah thought it was only "a man of God" who came to her, and foretold the birth of her son Samson. When the holy women entered the tomb of Jesus on the morning of the resurrection, "behold, two men stood by them in shining garments"; that is, the good women mistook the two angels for men. Gabriel, the great angel who appeared first to the Prophet Daniel, and afterwards to Zacharias the father of John the Baptist, and to the Virgin Mary, had "the appearance of a man."

II

But it is time to ask, What is meant by the words here, "It is his angel"? These words refer to a common belief among the Jews that every godly Israelite had one particular heavenly spirit assigned to him by God as his guardian angel. There were some who judged also that the guardian angel resembled in form and features the human being whom he was appointed to watch over. He was so like him as to be his

"double." Moreover, it was a Jewish superstition that when a man was just about to die, his guardian angel appeared to his friends in the man's figure and features, as an intimation of what was going to take place. The good people in Mary's house may therefore have thought, when Rhoda told them it was Peter who was knocking at the gate, "God is not going to answer our prayers; Peter's angel has appeared to let us know that he must die to-morrow."

The ancient Romans had a similar notion to that of the Jews; and so there is the Latin word *genius*. The Romans believed that there was a good or an evil spirit, who was appointed to preside over every man's destiny from the hour of his birth. Every man had either a "good genius," or an "evil genius."

Now what are we to say about this Jewish belief in guardian angels—that is, the notion that there is one ministering spirit to each individual? We can say no more than this, that the doctrine is not set down with any clearness in the Bible. Luke's statement that these words, "It is his angel," were spoken that night regarding the imprisoned apostle, gives no support to it. If the praying company in Mary's house had said instead, "It is Peter's ghost," that would not have proved the existence of ghosts; and so the words which they did say do not prove that the apostle had a guardian angel all to himself.

Of course the other text which I have already quoted, "He shall give His angels charge over thee," implies an appointment in special cases, but it does not speak of one and the same angel always for each godly man.

There is also a verse in Matthew's Gospel which speaks of children having guardian angels: "Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones; for I say unto you, That in heaven their angels do always behold the face of My Father which is in heaven." In these words our Saviour teaches that the children of the Heavenly Father enjoy angelic protection, and that the loftiest angels are set to keep watch over them. The children's angels are so high in honour that they may be said to stand in the presence of God, and quite near to His throne. But this does not prove that each boy, or girl, or each humble believer has his, or her, own guardian angel, and that he is always close at hand. The ministering spirits who are engaged in protecting their wards here on earth are at the same time "in heaven" continually beholding the face of the Eternal Father.

III

The important truth to remember is that there really is such a blessing as angel help. Although we have never seen an angel, millions of them walk the earth, both when we sleep and when we wake. It will not do for us to disbelieve in the

existence of such beings, merely because we have never seen one. When a little baby is born, it is surrounded with love and care from the earliest moments of its life; yet for a while it knows nobody, and is able to thank no one. And so is it too with those who have been born of God, and who shall be heirs of salvation. Holy angels receive the charge of them; although it may be one angel to-day and a different one to-morrow, or a large number of ministering spirits at the same time. We remember how at one time "the mountain was full of horses and chariots of fire round about Elisha."

A recent writer has beautifully said that in many a home where there are little children their loving mother, before retiring to her own room for the night, goes her rounds through the bedrooms to have a look at her sleeping boys and girls, and see that they are comfortable in their cribs. One she tucks carefully inside the blankets; another she lifts up a little, and makes more easy on his pillow; a third, who has become over-heated, she cools by throwing off the heavy coverlet. But the children are all in a deep sleep, and not one of them is in the least conscious of her loving help. When their mother goes to her own room she may say to her husband, "The dear bairnies never knew that I was near them." And perhaps the holy angels may speak in the same way to their Master about you and me. For it is certain that

as the evil spirits who are the messengers of Satan entice us to sin, although we may not detect their presence beside us, the good angels encamp round about us, and deliver us, and minister to us for our highest good.

XXII

Wanted, A Man

"Run ye to and fro through the streets of Jerusalem, and see now, and know, and seek in the broad places thereof, if ye can find a man, if there be any that doeth justly, that seeketh truth; and I will pardon her."—JER. v. 1 (R.V.).

I

THESE words remind one of Diogenes of Sinopé, an ancient town of Pontus, on the southern shore of the Black Sea. Diogenes was the son of a banker, and was born about 412 B.C. His father having been found guilty of coining false money, Diogenes quitted Sinopé and settled in Athens, where he became in course of time a famous philosopher. He is generally called "Diogenes the Cynic," the word Cynic meaning *dog-like*. The Cynics were men who abstained from pleasure, and despised wealth and learning, preferring instead to bear pain and poverty; and they were sometimes as surly as a dog in their intercourse with their fellow-men.

In summer Diogenes used to roll in hot sand, and in winter to embrace statues covered with

snow. By day he walked through the streets of Athens without a coat, and with coarse and ragged underclothing; he went barefoot, with a stick in his hand and a wallet on his shoulders. He lived on the plainest food, sometimes on raw meat; and he took no heed of the rains and storms of winter. By night he slept on the bare ground, either in the open street or under one of the porticoes; and at length, according to the common story, he took up his abode in a tub, or earthenware cask, which had formerly belonged to one of the heathen temples. Scholars always think of Diogenes in connection with his "tub." Once the tub was broken by a mischievous urchin, and the Athenians had it repaired at the public expense.

Diogenes did not spare the men of Athens for their vices and follies, and he often attacked these with satire and wit. One day he was seen carrying a lighted lantern through the streets in broad daylight, and on being asked why he was doing that, he answered, "I am looking for a man." The lantern meant that Diogenes regarded the city as a place of gross darkness, and the words meant that he judged the people of Athens in his time unworthy of the name of men. On another day he cried aloud in the market-place, "Hear me, O men!" and when a crowd gathered round him, he said with scorn, "I called for *men*, not pygmies."

By and by the philosopher thought he had found in the Spartans, whom most other Greeks regarded as inferior to the Athenians, the capacity for becoming such men as he desired; so he said, "*Men* I have found nowhere, and good *boys* I have met with in Sparta only."

One day he visited Plato, and trod rudely upon his cloak. "I am trampling on Plato's pride," he said. "Yes," replied Plato, "you are doing it with the greater pride of Diogenes."

Diogenes did not accomplish much in the way of reforming either the morals or the manners of the Athenians. His treatment of them was fitted to discourage them from trying to be manly What the American poet Lowell says is true—

> "The surest plan
> To make a man
> Is—think him one."

"Honour all men," writes the Apostle Peter Treat every human being with respect, and that will promote on his part self-respect. This was the way in which Dr. Arnold, the great schoolmaster of Rugby, treated the boys under his care He trusted them, and told them that he did so. If there was a boy who was in special danger of doing wrong, Arnold put that boy on his mettle by assuring him of the confidence he had in him, and of what he expected from him.

II

In this scripture we find the Prophet Jeremiah, who lived two hundred years before Diogenes, doing the same thing in Jerusalem that the famous Cynic did afterwards in Athens. Jeremiah is going about looking for a man. He is advertising for one: "Wanted, a just and true man." There was no lack in Jerusalem of human adults, for Jerusalem was a populous city; but there seemed to be an entire absence of *men*—that is, of human adults who were fair-minded and right-living, of persons whose practices and aims were right.

In the Book of Ecclesiastes, too, we see a Hebrew Diogenes going about, with the lantern of his wisdom in his hand, searching for an honest man and an honest woman. And when this sage returns, he tells us that, although he has been particularly careful in his search, he has only found one honest man in a thousand, and he has not been able to discover even one good woman. The Hebrew Cynic forgot that if, in the East during his time, the women were worse than the men, it was the men who had made them what they were.

But Jeremiah does not speak here as a Cynic. The Lord's prophet does not snarl. Properly speaking, it is God Himself who says these words by the mouth of His prophet: "Seek if ye can find a man." Jehovah had threatened to bring

ruin upon Jerusalem and Judah on account of their idolatry and wickedness, and the alarm of war was even now drawing near; but He declares that He would gladly pardon the people even yet, if only they would show a gleam of penitence and of desire to return to the right. Apart, however, from Jeremiah himself, and the godly Josiah, and Baruch, and Zephaniah, and the very narrow circle of Jeremiah's own disciples, it was impossible to find one just man in Jerusalem.

III

This scripture teaches us especially two great lessons:—

1. *Wherein true manhood consists.* A man who deserves the name *man* is one who acts justly and speaks truly. Manliness consists in seeing, approving, and doing what is right. Both the Greek language and the Latin were richer than our English tongue in this respect, that they had each two words for our one word "man." The Greek ἄνθρωπος meant man in the sense of a human being, while ἀνήρ meant a man who deserves the name of a man. The Latin words *homo* and *vir* had the same distinctive meanings. When, among the Romans, *homo* was opposed to *vir*, the former word expressed contempt, while *vir* meant a man of courage, principle, or honour. From *vir* comes our English word "virtue"; and if we know what virtue is, we know what true manhood means.

2. *Good men are "the salt of the earth."* The wicked world is spared for the sake of the godly people that are in it, whether these be many or few. Sodom and Gomorrah would not have been destroyed if amongst the multitude of their inhabitants, all entitled to the name *homo*, there had been ten worthy of the name *vir*. The little town of Zoar was spared for Lot's sake. And in the words before us the Lord tells Jeremiah that if he could find one real man in Jerusalem He would not allow Nebuchadnezzar and the Chaldeans to come and overthrow that city. In Psalm xv. we have a portrait, from the Old Testament standpoint, of the ideal man; and it is the individuals of our race who have these features of character that are "the salt of the earth."

XXIII

The Image of God

"The Image of the invisible God."—Col. i. 15.

WE sometimes say of a boy that "he is his father's very image," and that is what the Apostle Paul says here about the Lord Jesus Christ. The word "image" means likeness, copy, effigy; and the Redeemer is an exact copy of His Father in heaven—He is "the express Image of His Person."

Three thoughts suggest themselves.

I

God is Invisible.

The absolute God is hidden from view. He sees us, but we do not see Him. He never has been seen. It is true that we read again and again that the Lord "appeared" unto Abraham. Jacob, too, said at Peniel that he had "seen God face to face." In Moses' epitaph at the very close of the Book of Deuteronomy the writer says of him, "Moses, whom the Lord knew face to face." But the Lord, whom the patriarchs saw, and whom Moses and

Joshua conversed with, was not God the Father. Rather He was "the Angel of the Lord," "the Angel of His Presence," "the Messenger of the Covenant"—titles which refer to the Lord Jesus Christ, whom the Father employed, even before He came into the world in the flesh, to make known the Divine will to the patriarchs and to the chosen people.

But not only has God never been seen; it is also impossible that He should be seen. No created eye can look upon the Self-Existent One. We cannot see the "King eternal, immortal, invisible." God dwells in light which no man can approach. That light is so inaccessible that to the view of His creatures it seems to be darkness. When Moses at Mount Sinai besought the Lord to grant him a vision of His glory, the Lord allowed him to see His "back parts," and said, "Thou canst not see My face; for there shall no man see Me, and live."

II

THERE ARE PARTIAL MIRRORS AND IMAGES OF GOD.

One of the Psalms of David—the nineteenth—refers to three of these.

The first of the three is what we often call *Nature*, and what is called in the Bible God's "works." Nature and the works of God consist of the heavens and the earth,—everything that is created and governed by the Divine power and

wisdom. The visible universe is a mirror which reflects much of the character of its Maker. The rolling year is full of Him. "The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament showeth His handiwork." "The earth is full of His riches, and so is the great and wide sea." Nature speaks of God's wisdom, power, faithfulness, and goodness. This mirror, however, cannot reflect Him fully. In fact, it can show us only a little bit of His Person. "Lo, these are parts of His ways; but how little a portion is heard of Him? but the thunder of His power who can understand?"

The second of the mirrors which reflect God, according to the nineteenth Psalm, is the Divine *Word*. If Nature is the first mirror outside of ourselves, the next is Revelation. This latter was necessary to a fallen world; for the eye of sinful man could not see God's glory in nature, nor could man think out for himself right views of God. It was needful also that Revelation should be in writing, in order to keep it pure and entire throughout the ages. And so God has given us the sixty-six Books of Holy Scripture, which teach us what we are to believe about Him, and what duty He requires of us. The Word of God is a clearer mirror of Himself than the starry sky. All the nations that do not possess the Bible are in darkness about Him. And the use of the Book to us is that we may behold in it "as in a glass the glory of the Lord."

The third mirror is the human *Soul.* The closing verses of the nineteenth Psalm speak of that. But the human soul is more than a mirror of God. When the Almighty was going to create our race, as the flower and crown of His works upon earth, He said, "Let Us make man in Our image, after Our likeness." Man was made "a little lower than God." The first Adam was a copy of much that is in God. He was made after the likeness of God in knowledge and purity, and he was made for communion with Him. But, alas! man is a fallen creature. He is not now "the image and glory of God," as he was at first. The effect of sin has been to mutilate the image and distort the likeness, and thus change it into a caricature. Fallen human nature shows likeness to the Creator in intellect, and unlikeness in character; the union in one creature of the mind of an angel with the passions of a brute.

III

Jesus Christ is the one Perfect Image of God.

Nature is one glass in which God is mirrored, and the Holy Scriptures are another. Human nature is more than such a glass, for man was made in the Divine image; but since the Fall the highest features of this image have been marred. There is, however, one Image of God in which the likeness is exact and complete. It is Jesus Christ,

the God-Man, who is "the Image of the invisible God"—the very Image of His Father. Jesus is "the Last Adam"; and He is far liker God than the First Adam ever was, even in the days before the Fall. It cannot but be so, for He is divine as well as human. The perfect Image of God must be the Son of God.

"He that hath seen Me," said Jesus to His disciples, "hath seen the Father." To appreciate the power of God we have only to see our Saviour walking on the stormy sea, and then hushing the tempest with His word; or to look upon Lazarus coming forth out of the tomb, where his body had been lying for four days. To understand the wisdom of God we must listen to the teaching and the conversation of Him who spake as never man spake. To discover the love of God we must follow in the footsteps of Jesus, as He went about doing good—feeding the hungry multitudes, healing the sick, cleansing the lepers, raising the dead; and especially we must see Him in the anguish of the garden and of the cross, as He was bearing our sins away. To admire the holiness of God we must study the lovely character of Him who was "separate from sinners,"—whose moral nature was without a flaw,—whose soul was filled with such a vehement hatred of sin, and yet with such tender love for the sinner.

Yes, the likeness of the Man Christ Jesus to His Father is exact and complete. As a perfect

impression of a seal is the counterpart of the seal, so Jesus is the very Counterpart of God. No other son is so like his father as the Only-begotten is like His Father in heaven.

The Second Commandment forbids us, in our worship of God, to employ any graven image. When we pray, however, it is natural to have some form—some "manner of similitude"—before the eye of our minds. What kind of picture of the Hearer of Prayer should we allow to ourselves? Let us accustom ourselves, when we are upon our knees, to see Jesus. He is not a graven image: He is God's living Image, "the express Image of His Person." We can bow down to Him without idolatry.

XXIV

Cleopatra's Needle

"The obelisks of the house of the sun, that is in the land of Egypt."—JER. xliii. 13 (R.V., and margin).

I

AMONG the many monuments in the city of London, there is one that is literally a stranger in a strange land. All the others are English and Christian; but this one is Egyptian and heathen. I refer to the great obelisk or column, made of one single block of stone, which is called Cleopatra's Needle. This monument stands on the Thames Embankment, not far from the Houses of Parliament and Westminster Abbey. It is made of red granite; and is by far the largest quarried stone in great Britain, for it is 70 feet in length, and weighs 186 tons. It is about ten times heavier than the largest of the stones which stand upright in the wonderful circle at Stonehenge.

The London obelisk is covered with hieroglyphs—that is, with Egyptian sacred picture-

writing; and these inscriptions set forth the personal greatness and the achievements of two of the Pharaohs, namely, Thothmes III., who lived in the fifteenth century before Christ, and Rameses II., who flourished two centuries afterwards. These two Pharaohs were the two mightiest of the kings of ancient Egypt.

Thothmes III. set up four great obelisks at Heliopolis, about two hundred years before the time of Moses. Perhaps also he erected others besides in different parts of Egypt. But these four are specially famous, and have been named "The *Needles*"—two of them "Pharaoh's," and two "Cleopatra's." One of the two "Pharaoh's Needles" now stands in Constantinople, and the other is still standing at Heliopolis. One of "Cleopatra's" found a home in the Central Park, New York, in the year 1881; while the other stands on the left bank of the Thames, in London.

II

This heathen monument is the oldest work of art in our country. It must be about thirty-four centuries old. The obelisk was hewn, all in one block, out of the red granite quarry at Syene, a place which is mentioned in the Book of Ezekiel. Syene is situated on the extreme south border of Egypt, almost in Nubia, about seven hundred miles up the Nile. Together with its

companion Needle, it was floated down the river these seven hundred miles, on a huge raft, to the sacred city Heliopolis, a city which is called "On" in Holy Scripture.

Heliopolis means "city of the sun." It was a city of temples dedicated to the worship of the sun. And the two obelisks stood side by side for fourteen hundred years in front of the great temple of On, as the famous pillars Jachin and Boaz did in front of Solomon's temple. It was this temple of the sun which had for one of its priests Potiphérah, the father-in-law of Joseph.

Possibly both Jacob and Joseph, and quite certainly Moses and Aaron, have gazed upon the great obelisk which the people of London now see. It is likely enough that Moses, as a young man, might watch the Egyptian engravers writing upon it some of the inscriptions which it still bears. It is certain at least that in the college which stood near the Needle Moses was educated in all the wisdom of the Egyptians. Plato, too, studied there, more than a thousand years after Moses. On the night of the Exodus the light of the pillar of fire might throw the shadow of the obelisk across the path of the Israelites, as they began their march towards the wilderness. Those who look upon the hoary monument in our time should think of all this, and gaze upon it with increased veneration.

In the year 23 B.C. the Emperor Augustus caused the two Needles to be removed from Heliopolis to Alexandria, and to be set up there in front of the Palace of the Cæsars. This was done seven years after the death of Cleopatra, the beautiful and wicked Queen of Egypt. Cleopatra had nothing whatever to do with the project to bring them from On; but as she had been a favourite with her people, they seem to have given the two obelisks her name out of regard for her memory. The name, however, is inaccurate, and apt to be misleading.

For fifteen hundred years Cleopatra's two Needles stood at Alexandria, until by reason of the encroachment of the sea upon the land and the restless action of the waves, the one that is now in London fell prostrate to the ground, leaving its companion standing alone to mark the site of the Palace of the Cæsars. The latter, as I have said, is now in New York. The former, after lying in the sand for three hundred years, was shipped to come to England in 1878; was lost in the sea during a storm, and recovered after a few days; and was set up on the Thames Embankment, upon a pedestal of grey granite. This was done, as a gift to the British nation, by Sir Erasmus Wilson, a famous surgeon and philanthropist. The great obelisk is a wonderful link connecting the civilisation of the twentieth century with that of the old world.

III

The sight of this venerable column from ancient Egypt suggests various thoughts and lessons. I shall mention two.

1. *The change and decay which we see everywhere.* The Egypt of the old world was a mighty nation—wealthy, prosperous, and highly civilised. We marvel at its gigantic pyramids, sphinxes, and obelisks, and revere their antiquity. The very ruins of the Egyptian temples and palaces are stupendous. The sight of Cleopatra's Needle takes us back in imagination to the land and people which took the lead in the march of civilisation. Where is that great nation now? God has overthrown it, as the Hebrew prophets said He would do, for its idolatry and wickedness. "All flesh is grass, and all the goodliness thereof is as the flower of the field: the grass withereth, the flower fadeth; because the Spirit of the Lord bloweth upon it: surely the people is grass."

2. *The glory of the Sun of Righteousness.* For fourteen hundred years the obelisk stood at Heliopolis, in front of the great temple of the sun. It was therefore associated with sun-worship, which was the supreme idolatry of the Nile country. Among the Egyptians Horus was the morning sun, Ra or Phra the mid-day sun, Osiris the afternoon sun, Tum the setting sun, and so on. But we in this land are blessed in that

we know the true Sun-God. We worship Him, not on Sunday alone—the day on which our Saxon forefathers worshipped the sun, but on all the seven days of the week. "The Lord God is a Sun and Shield." The Lord Jesus Christ is "the Light of the world," and also "the true Light, which lighteth every man that cometh into the world." The ancient Egyptians were feeling after Him when they built their sun temples.

XXV

"Where is the Lamb?"

"Where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"—GEN. xxii. 7.

I

WHAT a wonderful story is this of the sacrifice of Isaac! We see the aged Abraham and his son climbing the hill together. Isaac is carrying upon his shoulder the wood upon which he is to be bound for sacrifice, wood which his father had cleft with splitting heart. We do not know how old Isaac was at this time. All that we know is that he was old enough to bear a fatiguing journey of three days on foot, and then to carry the faggots for the altar-fire uphill on his shoulder. He was therefore also old enough to object, had he been so minded, to his being bound and laid upon the altar. He could quite easily have resisted and defeated Abraham's attempt to offer him as a burnt offering.

And was not this a heart-rending question which the lad put to his father as they were going up the hill: "My father, behold the fire and the wood; but where is the lamb for a burnt offering?"

Abraham must all along have been very heavy-hearted at the thought of what was before him to do. He had left his tents at Beersheba without telling Sarah, Isaac's mother, what God had commanded. When he placed the load of faggots upon his son he was laying a much heavier burden upon his own heart. He carried the fire in a censer at his side; but what a hot furnace was burning within his soul! And now that artless, trustful word, "My father," must have wrung every fibre of his loving nature with anguish. Surely this was enough to break down even Abraham's iron resolution to do with his son what the Lord had required. Yet he could answer, though he was sick at heart, and though he felt as if the earth was quaking under his feet when he steadied his voice to speak the words, "My son, God will provide Himself a lamb for a burnt offering."

By and by father and son reached the top of the hill. With Isaac's help Abraham gathered a sufficient number of loose stones, and placed them one upon another, till a rude altar was built. Then he laid upon the altar the wood which Isaac had carried up the hill. And only now at length he said to him, "My son, *thou* art the lamb that God hath provided for this altar!" He explained to him how the matter stood, and what it was that the Lord had commanded. Isaac received the awful tidings most meekly. He did not resist the Divine will. He did not run away. With absolute

submission he put his life into his father's hands, and allowed himself to be bound with cords, and placed upon the altar.

But, although Isaac was obedient, God did not permit him to be put to death. After all, He did not want Abraham to shed his son's blood. What He did demand was the entire surrender of the patriarch's will. And the highest praise which can be given to Abraham is that what the Apostle Paul says of Almighty God can be said of him also, "He spared not his own son."

II

"Where is the Lamb for a burnt offering?" Where is it? It is not Isaac alone who, with his young voice, has asked this question. This is the question of the ages. It is the cry of the human heart everywhere: "Behold the fire and the wood; but where is the Lamb?"

Man's conscience is troubled and defiled because of sin. He knows that he has lost the favour of God; for God hates sin, and must punish it. So he desires to present some offering that will reconcile the sinner to God, and bring peace to the conscience. The idols of the heathen world show very clearly that the desire for a visible God has a foundation in the nature of man; and in the same way the altars of the heathen world say that man feels his need of a sacrifice to bring him back to God, as his Benefactor and Friend.

For this purpose the heathen nations have brought to their gods all kinds of presents, and have offered all sorts of sacrifices. In this Book of Genesis we read of some of the different kinds. Some have tried Cain's offering. "Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the Lord"; and others have given similar gifts of a material kind, such as gold and silver, and costly treasures. But man's conscience refuses to be satisfied with this kind of sacrifice. Gold and silver are themselves liable to corruption, and are in every respect of too little value to set any one free from the guilt of sin.

Others have tried Abel's offering. He presented to God living victims—the firstlings (first-born) of his flock, and the fattest portions of these. But those who had not Abel's faith could never be pleased with such sacrifices. They must always have felt that the blood of a beast can never take away the sin of a man.

Others of their own free will have tried Abraham's offering. "Even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods." The valley of Hinnom to the south of Jerusalem, for example, was long defiled by sacrifices of children to the devouring fire-god, Moloch. But even these cruel offerings were in vain. There was still a sense of failure. The oppressive burden of sin remained.

At the Hebrew Tabernacle in the wilderness,

and afterwards at the Temple, two lambs were offered in sacrifice every day for hundreds of years. One was sacrificed in the evening as an atonement for the sins of the day, and another in the morning for the sins of the night. Besides these, multitudes of other animals were offered, such as goats and calves. And there were also all the lambs which were sacrificed on the day of the Passover. But none of these offerings, nor the whole of them put together, were able to put away sin.

And so the question comes back, "Where is the Lamb?" "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God?" Where is the sinner to find a real and a satisfying sacrifice for sin? The great Day of Atonement of the Old Testament Church occurs in the season of autumn. On that day still many thousands of Jews unite in solemn acts of worship from which the ancient sacrifices are entirely absent. Let us pray that the God of Abraham may soon move multitudes of Jews to ask, "Where is the Lamb for a burnt offering?"

III

The whole New Testament answers the question. It says that the Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb which sinful men need. When we study its teachings on the subject we see that Isaac was a type of Christ in his meek submission, for he was really "obedient unto death." Even the ram that

was offered instead of Isaac was a type of Christ as our Substitute. And all the sacrifices of the Temple of Jerusalem pointed forward to the great Sacrifice of Calvary.

John the Baptist answered the question, "Where is the Lamb?" when he saw Jesus mingling in the crowd of his own followers one morning, and with pointing finger said of Him, "Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world." That was as much as to say, Here at last is the Sacrifice that we have been looking for! The lambs that went before were men's lambs, but this is God's Lamb. And God's Lamb will do what the others could not do; He will take away the whole mass of the world's sin.

Jesus Himself answered the question of our text three years afterwards when He was "brought" one day from Pilate's palace "as a lamb to the slaughter." At the very time of the Passover Christ was sacrificed as "our Passover," to redeem us from the bondage of sin. His apostles, too, have answered the question in their inspired writings. Peter did, when he wrote the words, "Ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, as silver and gold; but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot." And John the Divine did, when he tells us that he saw in the midst of the throne in heaven "a Lamb as It had been slain." From Calvary to the throne the

passage is one of right; and the right is in His blood. The saints in glory "have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. Therefore are they before the throne of God."

XXVI

A Name to Live

"Thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead."—REV. iii. 1.

I

THESE sad words were written about the Christian congregation at Sardis, in Asia Minor. Sardis was one of the great cities of the ancient world; indeed the Greeks looked upon it for long as the greatest of all cities. It was the capital of the important kingdom of Lydia. Although a magnificent and wealthy city, it was also a wicked one; and the Christian Church that had been planted there soon showed signs of decay. When this Epistle to the Sardian Church was written there were a few pure and faithful Christians still in it; but the congregation, as a whole, was in a dead state. It had degenerated sadly from the godliness which at first belonged to it. It was still living with the credit of superior piety, but the character it now bore was much better than it deserved.

There are few public positions in this country

that are more highly coveted than that of "Warden of the Cinque Ports." The great Duke of Wellington held this office for nearly a quarter of a century. The Cinque Ports were five great harbours on the coast of Kent and Sussex, lying opposite to France. Their names were: Sandwich, Dover, Hythe, Romney, and Hastings. Seven or eight hundred years ago these were considered England's finest harbours. But what about the Cinque Ports now, in the twentieth century? Sandwich, which eight hundred years ago was "the most famous of all the English harbours," stands to-day two miles from the seacoast, and is quite decayed. It is the same with Hythe; the original harbour of that place is at the present time three miles inland. And as for Romney, it ceased to be a seaport long ago; the little town is not now either on the sea-shore or on a navigable river. The towns of Winchelsea and Rye, situated in the same region, came, some time later than the famous five, to enjoy the same privileges as the five; but the sea has since retired two miles from Rye, while Old Winchelsea was swallowed up by the sea in the year 1287, leaving New Winchelsea standing, but useless as a seaport. It is true that Dover and Hastings still flourish, especially Dover, as a seaport; but the Cinque Ports, as a whole, have a name that they live, and are dead.

Now the Church at Sardis was like the decayed

harbour of Sandwich, or that of Romney. It had a fame for spiritual life; but that life was mostly in the past. The congregation was like a tree with plenty of leaves and blossoms, but quite hollow in the trunk. Or it was like a fruit which looked well, but was rotten at heart and bitter to the taste. Sardis was a lifeless Church; not indeed altogether dead, but "ready to die."

The Lord does not consider any congregation as full of life and prosperity merely because it has a large membership, or because it has no anxiety about money to pay its way. A living church is one that has a godly minister, godly office-bearers and godly members. In a healthy church parents are diligent in observing family worship, and in teaching religious truth to their children. A church is prosperous when the congregation is like a hive of bees in the doing of Christian work, and when the people are well spoken of in the community for the high standard of their obedience to the Ten Commandments.

Some churches answer well to this description; but others, alas! do not. There are those congregations here and there that seem to have forgotten God, and Christ, and the Holy Spirit, and the very purpose of their own existence. Like the congregation at Sardis, they are in a dead state.

In Coleridge's very striking poem, *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, there is depicted the death of

an entire ship's crew of two hundred men; and after a while, further on in the poem, we see these men, still dead, getting up and resuming the navigation of the vessel, although it is not their own spirits that have come back to their bodies.

> "The mariners all 'gan work the ropes,
> Where they were wont to do;
> They raised their limbs like lifeless tools—
> We were a ghastly crew.
>
> The body of my brother's son
> Stood by me, knee to knee;
> The body and I pulled at one rope,
> But he said nought to me."

That will do very well for a picture of a congregation of unconverted people. Fancy a dead man preaching in the pulpit! Think of two dead men standing at the collection plate! Picture a congregation in the pews most of whom are "dead in trespasses and sins!"

II

But there is a lesson here for individuals as well as for churches. What about our Christian names and our family surnames?

Lord Wolseley, the British general, says in his Autobiography, "The fact that I had inherited a very old name had a marked influence upon my boyhood and early life." Walter Pringle, of Greenknowe, the Covenanter, when he told his boy what his name meant, added, "Since I understood the

meaning of my own name, it hath been of some use to me. I pray that it may be so also to thee."

Sometimes one's name should be the outward and visible sign of a soul that is "alive unto God." There are many such names in the Bible; but in the case of some of the men and women of Holy Scripture, though they had a name that they lived, they were dead.

The name Absalom means "father of peace," but David's unhappy son who bore it did not live up to it. Judas means "one who is praised," and it was a common Hebrew name; but ever since it was worn by Iscariot, the traitor apostle, it has been a name of the lowest shame. Ananias and Sapphira were grand names for a husband and wife to have: for Ananias means "one to whom Jehovah has been gracious," and the name Sapphira is either connected with the precious stone "sapphire," or comes from a Hebrew word meaning "beautiful." But, sad to say, this couple did not live up to their fine names; and the Lord visited them with a dreadful doom.

Let me mention the meanings of some of the names of persons which are in ordinary use amongst ourselves. John is a common name for a boy: it means "the gracious gift of God." Robert is another: it means "bright in fame." Andrew means "manly." Matthew means "the gift of the Lord." Arthur means "high, noble."

Angus means "excellent virtue." Ernest, of course, means "earnest."

Now for a few names of girls. Ann, Anna, and Hannah mean "grace." Christina means "belonging to Christ." Agnes and Catherine both mean "pure." Emily means "industrious." Martha means "lady." Alice is said to mean "noble." Margaret means "pearl." Euphemia means "fair fame." Janet means "the grace of the Lord."

I counsel you boys and girls that have such names to remember that each of them is a name suggestive of spiritual life. "Thou hast a name that thou livest": see to it that thy soul be not dead. "Reckon ye yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord."

XXVII

Jeremiah and Martin Luther

"The LORD hid them."—JER. xxxvi. 26.

IT has often been said that "History repeats itself." Again and again it has happened that the Lord had to conceal His prophets for a time in order to preserve their lives and to prolong their usefulness. He hid Moses away in Midian from the wrath of Pharaoh. He hid Elijah from the anger of Ahab and Jezebel. And here we find Him hiding Jeremiah from the vengeance of Jehoiakim, the wicked king of Judah.

I shall say a few words first of all about Jeremiah's experience here, and then refer to a parallel experience in times which are comparatively modern.

I

The Prophet Jeremiah, and also Baruch, his devoted friend and secretary, were in danger of their lives. The danger came in this way. God had directed Jeremiah to commit to writing the substance of the prophecies of judgment against

Jerusalem and Judah which he had uttered at various times during the past twenty-three years of his work as a prophet. And Jeremiah had done this. He had dictated the words to Baruch, and Baruch had written them down in a book, that is, in a roll of parchment. Jeremiah's messages of doom foretold the destruction of Jerusalem and its Temple, the seventy years' exile in Babylon, and the violent and dishonourable end of King Jehoiakim himself.

The contents of the Book had been read to three audiences. The whole was read by Baruch for the first time to an immense congregation on a solemn fast-day in the month of December. The whole was read by Baruch a second time to the princes and the courtiers of Jehoiakim at their own request. On the third occasion a part of the roll was read by Jehudi, one of the courtiers, to the king himself. But the king had not patience to listen long to the record of the evil that was fast coming upon himself and his kingdom as a punishment for their sins. He took up a penknife, cut the parchment into strips, and burned it in the fire of charcoal over which he was sitting warming himself. An act, this, not only of daring blasphemy, but also of the most wretched folly! And then he ordered the arrest of both Jeremiah and Baruch, —as if the destruction of the Book and the imprisonment of its author would bring to nought the Divine warnings.

The two men were sought for, "but the Lord hid them." Although Jeremiah's life had been little better than a prolonged martyrdom, God had more work for him yet to do. Therefore He did not allow the king to find out where His servant was.

And how did the prophet, and his faithful attendant Baruch, spend their time when they were in safe hiding? They used it to write down all Jeremiah's Book, which had been burned, over again. The first prophetic roll had been destroyed; but the messages which it contained had burned themselves into Jeremiah's soul. So he restored the whole by dictating it again to Baruch, who had the pen of a ready writer. The new edition which issued, as it were, from the flames was also an enlarged edition of Jeremiah's prophecies; for we read at the very end of this chapter that "there were added besides unto them many like words." The prophet, therefore, did not weary while he had to remain in hiding, out of reach of the king's anger. He devoted himself to Bible work. He set down in writing a large part of one of the Books of Holy Scripture.

II

Now let us see from one example how "History repeats itself." We come away down in imagination from about six hundred years before Christ to the sixteenth century of the Christian era.

The scene is a room in a picturesque German

castle, which stands some six hundred feet above the town of Eisenach. There we see a man who has the appearance of a well-to-do farmer, dressed in hunting coat and boots. He looks rather under forty years of age. He is large-boned and seems formidable. He has rather a rough face, and small sunken eyes. He is somewhat uncouth in his manner, and vehement in his gestures. A man, apparently, of little refinement; and yet, when he talks with a friend, his face often lights up as if with sunshine. On the table in the room lie some books and papers. The Samson-like man is earnestly studying one of these. Sometimes he lifts one of the others, and searches quickly for some particular place in it, and then returns to the one which he is studying. Next he takes up his pen, dips it in his ink-bottle, and writes down a sentence, or part of a sentence, on the page of an unfinished manuscript. We may perhaps notice, too, that there is a place on one of the four walls of the room where the plaster is broken; and that there is a black splash, as if of ink, about the spot.

Who is this farmer-looking man? and what is it that he is doing? He is Martin Luther, the great German Reformer; and he is at work translating the New Testament out of the original Greek into the German tongue.

The Lord has hidden Luther in the romantic Castle of the Wartburg among the mountains,

in order to protect and save his life. For at the Diet of Worms, where he had made such a courageous stand, he had been put under the ban of the Empire and proclaimed an outlaw. So when he was on his way home from Worms to Wittenberg the Reformer was seized by a band of armed men wearing masks, who were really his friends, and was conveyed through the forest of Thuringia, and made a prisoner in the Wartburg. Luther's disappearance is said to have been arranged by his friend Frederick, the Elector of Saxony, who was afraid that his life would not now be safe, even in Wittenberg. And none of his friends, not even the Elector, knew at first where he was. Indeed, no one in all Germany, except those who had snatched him away, could tell for a time whether he was now dead or alive. The report flew everywhere that he had been murdered. Thus wonderfully "the Lord hid" him. And the Reformer called the hill fortress that gave him shelter his "Patmos."

For ten months Luther remained in the Wartburg. He laid aside his monk's dress, and let the hair grow over his tonsure, that is, the shaven part of his head. He wore the costume of a knight, and was known only by the name of "Sir George." He allowed his beard to grow. He spent his time in rambling about the forest, in hunting, and in writing. The last mentioned was his chief occupation. From his mountain retreat

he sent far and wide over Germany letters, commentaries, and treatises. But the principal work with which he occupied his prison hours was that of translating the New Testament from the original Greek into German. He felt more and more that the Bible was the one foundation upon which the Church of the Reformation must be reared; and he wanted his countrymen to possess that book in their mother tongue. He laboured so hard at this heavy piece of work that he actually finished his translation of the New Testament before he left his mountain prison in March 1522. The manuscript was at once revised by Melanchthon and other friends, and the book was published six months afterwards.

The grand old Castle of the Wartburg was splendidly restored about fifty years ago, and is now a show place. The tourist has the privilege of standing in Luther's room, in which there is still the old oaken table at which Luther sat. On the table, too, is the oaken inkstand which he threw one day at the head of the devil, when he imagined the devil appeared to him in the form of a lion, as he was busy translating the New Testament.

Luther's Bible fixed the standard of the German language. Indeed it was Luther's Bible that made that language; for before Luther's day there were many dialects only, but not what is now called "High German." And ever since, Germans have

striven to write in the same style as the Reformer does in his translation. But, better far than that, Luther's captivity was the means, under God, of setting Germany free from the slavery of the Pope of Rome. What would the Protestant Reformation have been without the Word of God? And it was Luther who gave that Word to the German people in their own tongue.

Thus we see that there is a close parallel between a part of Jeremiah's life and a part of that of Luther. Both of these great and brave men were hidden away for a season to protect them from personal danger, and also to guard the interests of true religion at the time. Jeremiah used his "Wartburg" experience to commit to writing the Book of his prophecies; and Luther used his to translate the New Testament into German. These two noble men, while they were in hiding, did Bible work which has been of infinite service to the world.

XXVIII

The Blessedness of Giving

"Remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how He said, It is more blessed to give than to receive."—ACTS xx. 35.

ALTHOUGH this is one of the great sayings of Jesus our Saviour, it is not found in any of the four Gospels. Many of the important words spoken by the Master to His disciples were not written down, but were only handed down. And the result was, that most of them have been lost. The number of the "words of Jesus" outside of the New Testament does not exceed two or three dozen.

We know that "grace was poured into His lips." His lips "dropped as a honeycomb." And we may well be thankful that this golden saying, "It is more blessed to give than to receive," has been rescued and added to Holy Scripture in this Book of Acts, seeing that it was not to find a place in the Gospels. This is the only saying of Jesus not found in them that is recorded in the New Testament.

I

Christ's "blesseds" are always the opposite of the world's. Christ says, "Blessed are the poor in spirit"; but the world says, "Blessed are the rich in flesh." Christ says, "Blessed are they that mourn"; but the world says, "Blessed are the merry." Christ says, "Blessed are the peace-makers"; but the world says, "Blessed are the war-makers." So Christ says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive"; but the world reads it the other way about, saying, "It is more blessed to receive than to give."

It is true that there is a good deal of happiness in getting. Every boy and girl loves to receive birthday or Christmas presents. Hotel waiters and railway porters are not in the habit of refusing the "tips" that are quietly put into their hands. In the Eastern world the beggars clamour for "backsheesh"—this being a Persian word which means a gratuity. But the danger everywhere is that people may become too fond of getting, and love to receive more than to give. Greed is a base and evil thing. Covetousness is idolatry. We call a man whose chief pleasure is in hoarding wealth a "miser"; for, though he seeks his happiness in gathering and saving, he is really miserable.

One of Solomon's proverbs says, "He that withholdeth corn, the people shall curse him." And

in such a case the curse of the people may be the curse of God Himself. An old German legend, which the poet Southey has turned into verse, illustrates this. On a rock in the middle of the Rhine, near Bingen, stands an old castle called the Mouse Tower. Bishop Hatto of Mainz lived there about the middle of the tenth century. He is said to have been a selfish man, and a hard-hearted oppressor of the poor. During a time of famine he laid up large stores of grain in his tower, and refused to sell it to the starving people. But by and by troops of hungry rats swam across the river, swarmed into the tower, ate up the corn, and killed and devoured the bishop. This was the curse of God upon a mean and cruel man.

There are many people who do not love to give nearly so much as they love to receive. Those good people who have no objection to the system of church bazaars, and who want to help some congregation that is holding a bazaar, visit the bazaar on the forenoon of the first day on which it is open, make some purchases, and willingly pay the full value of the goods which they buy. But the people who do not think at all of doing a service to the church, but only of profit to themselves, wait until the last evening of the bazaar before they visit it; for then the articles which remain are sold very cheap, and the buyers secure great "bargains." These

people find their happiness in getting, not in giving.

When a young lady is going to be married, and asks a hundred or a hundred and fifty people to the wedding, that is all right if she invites them because she loves them, or at least because she thinks kindly of them as her friends. But if she sends out so many invitations for no other reason than that she wants to get as many marriage presents as possible,—asking a number of people for whom she does not care, in order to make sure of gifts from them,—that is a mean sort of thing to do, and it shows that her chief happiness lies in receiving, and not in giving.

II

Surely there are no well-conditioned young people who have not felt, at least sometimes, the superior happiness of giving. To receive a birthday gift is good, especially if one has not been expecting it; but to give such a gift is often a source of still greater pleasure. Those who are bountiful from right motives shall by no means go unrewarded.

The habit of freely giving enriches one's own nature. It promotes wealth of heart; while the love of money makes the heart poor. The greedy hireling spirit asks with Shylock, "Is it so nominated in the bond?" but the Christian spirit says, "It is more blessed to give than to receive."

The law of the new life is to give, and to minister for the good of others: to expend valuable time, to give gold and silver, to make sympathetic visits, and to offer intercessory prayer. Every kindly service which a Christian does to any person in need is one more stroke of the chisel which is carving within himself a beautiful character, fair and comely to the view of God.

It is the Divine law that we get by giving. "There is that scattereth, and yet increaseth." We must sow, if we would reap. And in due season we shall reap, if we faint not. The woman of Zarephath gave the Prophet Elijah her last meal; and God not only sustained her for two years, but gave her back her son after he had been taken from her by death, and also enriched her soul still more with His grace.

When Thomas Carlyle was a little boy at Ecclefechan, only six years old, he had saved a few coppers, which he kept in an earthenware jar. One afternoon, when his father and mother were from home, an old beggar-woman knocked at the door of the cottage and asked for alms. The little fellow's heart was touched; he went for the jar, brought it to the woman, and emptied all the pennies into her hand. Many years afterwards Carlyle used to tell his friends about that act of his childhood, and say, "I only began to know then what the joy of heaven was like."

The hearts of good men who have preached

Christ are filled with the same kind of joy when they see the fruit of their labours. The Apostle Paul must have rejoiced as with the joy of harvest, when, on returning to Antioch from his first missionary tour, Barnabas and he "gathered the church together, and rehearsed all that God had done with them, and how He had opened the door of faith to the Gentiles." John Williams, the great missionary to the South Sea Islands, must have been full of holy gladness in the day when whole tribes, led by their chiefs, brought their idols and laid them down at his feet, declaring their own conversion to the faith of Christ. And is not every earnest pastor refreshed by his own message of salvation to his people? It is the experience of all Christian workers that, in bringing blessing to others, their own souls are also abundantly watered.

III

The Lord Jesus Christ Himself experienced the truth of His own great saying. He spoke this beatitude as the result of His experience. It was the keynote of His own beautiful life among men. Jesus was a most bountiful Giver. He was always giving. He went about doing good. "Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though He was rich, yet for your sakes He became poor, that ye through His poverty might be rich." The knowledge of the fact that His obedience

unto death would be the means of the world's redemption gave Him great joy. This was "the joy set before Him"; and for it "He endured the cross, despising the shame."

The Father of Jesus, too, is a great Giver. The world's Redeemer is the very Image of His Father. The blessed God finds His blessedness in giving. He "giveth us richly all things to enjoy." He spared not His own Son—His "unspeakable gift." He gives eternal life.

The apostle exhorts the elders of the Church at Ephesus to "remember" these words of the Lord Jesus about the blessedness of giving. During his three years' ministry among them He had sometimes quoted the words, and taught the truth which they express. It is for us also to lay that truth to heart. If you and I become fonder of giving than of getting, we shall be like God, and shall have some of the happiness of God.

XXIX

God's Care of the Homeless

"And God heard the voice of the lad."—GEN. xxi. 17.

I

HAGAR'S son, Ishmael, is the lad spoken of here. He was seventeen years old when his mother and he were sent away from Abraham's home. Isaac, the child of promise, had been born about three years before this. And at the great feast in connection with the weaning of Isaac, his mother Sarah had seen Ishmael "mocking"—that is, jesting, or making sport of her child. So she at once insisted that Abraham should "cast out" both Ishmael and his slave-mother. Abraham was grieved at this request, for he dearly loved his first-born son; but God encouraged him to yield to it.

Early one morning, therefore, the boy and his mother were sent off, with nothing but a bottle of water and a few days' provisions in a bag. To us who live in the West the proceeding appears

to be very cruel; but even now among the Arabs a young son leaves his father's encampment just in this way to push his fortune. Hagar set out, doubtless intending to return to Egypt, her native country; but she soon lost the track, and Ishmael and she wandered about in the desert until the lad sank exhausted from fatigue and thirst. His mother laid his head under one of the bushes, and seated herself sadly at a little distance in hopeless sorrow.

But, we read, "God heard the voice of the lad." The writer has chosen the words because they suit the name *Ishmael*, which means "God hears," or "May God hear." Is it meant that in his distress the boy was praying? It may be so, although it is not said that either Ishmael or his mother prayed. Let us hope they did. But, if there were not prayers, there were at least cries of suffering and distress; and these God heard, and He remembered His promise to Abraham about Ishmael. So He showed poor Hagar a well close beside her, which she had not noticed; and soon both her own thirst, and that of her almost dying son, were quenched. The boy revived; and Hagar's heart also was comforted with the fresh promise which God gave her of her son's future greatness. Ishmael was to be the founder of a mighty nation. The powerful Arab tribes were to look back to him as their Father.

II

"God heard the voice of the lad." He pities every child that is homeless and helpless—every child who is orphaned, and lost in the wilderness.

There was the infant Moses in his little boat of papyrus among the reeds of the Nile. "The babe wept," and God heard his voice, and sent the princess from the palace of the Pharaoh to rescue him.

There also was the infant Jesus, carried in His mother's arms from Bethlehem one night, in darkness and danger, to go all the way to Egypt to escape the fury of the bloodthirsty Herod. It must have taken Joseph and Mary three days to reach the friendly shelter of the left bank of Rhinokolura, the river of Egypt, where they would be safe from Herod's cruelty. That was a time of peril which Mary would never forget, and she would be always grateful to God for protecting her and her Son. The thought of that time will also endear to the heart of Jesus all children whose lives are in danger.

Some years ago a small pleasure-boat, with a very little boy all alone in it, drifted out one summer day into mid-channel from the shore of one of the lochs on the Clyde. No one seemed to notice what had taken place, and the child was not missed. Two hours afterwards he was brought home, safe and sound, to his parents; and

the story of the dangerous adventure which he had had was told to them. By and by the boy's mother was able to say, "How did you feel, Tommy dear, when the big waves were all around you,—did you feel afraid?" "No, mother," replied the child, "for I prayed to God to take care of me; and then the men in the big steamer saw me, and they came in one of their boats and rescued me." God heard the voice of that little lad.

The business centre of the city of London is the Royal Exchange—a noble building, with this inscription high up on the front of it, "The earth is the Lord's, and the fulness thereof." But, higher up than that, on the very top of the tower of the Exchange, surmounting every other part of the building, is the figure of a monster *grasshopper*; it is there, although the merchants of the City and the busy crowds do not often look up to see it. The present Royal Exchange is the third building of the name that has stood on this spot. The first was that of Sir Thomas Gresham, which was opened by Queen Elizabeth in the year 1571, and destroyed in the Great Fire of 1666. The second, and the most famous of the three, was opened after three years; but it also was burned down, in 1838. The present Royal Exchange cost £180,000, and was opened in 1844 by Queen Victoria.

Now the figure of a grasshopper has stood on

the highest pinnacle of the London Exchange from the time of Queen Elizabeth until to-day—that is, for more than three hundred years. And the reason of this is that the grasshopper was the crest of Sir Thomas Gresham, the founder of the Royal Exchange. But why did that wealthy merchant and servant of the State have a grasshopper for his crest? The story is that this was on account of a wonderful deliverance that had been wrought by one of these insects. A little child of the family, belonging to an earlier generation, had been left in a field, and would have perished, but that a boy was passing, who, hearing the chirp of a grasshopper, gave chase to it, as many a boy would do. He followed the lively insect, and snatched at it as it leaped from the grass and the wild flowers, until it brought him in sight of the lost infant. The grasshopper became thus the means of saving the child's life. And so always afterwards, as the story goes, the grateful Gresham family adopted the grasshopper as their crest; and there it is, down to the present day, forming the vane of the London Royal Exchange. It tells the busy, toiling city that "God heard the voice of the lad where he was."

XXX

The Bass Rock

"I John . . . was in the isle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the testimony of Jesus Christ."—Rev. i. 9.

I

PATMOS is a small and very rugged island in the Ægean Sea, twenty-five miles from the coast of Asia Minor. It was used by the Romans as a place of exile for convicts, and is famous as the island to which John the Apostle was banished by the Emperor Domitian, near the close of the first century.

However, I am not going to speak about John and Patmos, but about a Scottish island prison, of which many of the boys and girls may have heard, and which some may have seen. I refer to the Bass Rock, which is placed, like a sentinel, near the mouth of the Firth of Forth, and only a few miles from the town of North Berwick. The geologist tells us that this island must have sprung into existence during a time of wonderful volcanic convulsion, when the whole region from Dunbar to Stirling was a mass of smoking craters.

The Bass Rock is about a mile in circumference, and it is four hundred feet in height. Its dome-shaped mass makes it very conspicuous. It has been described as "like a mountain sunk in water," or "like a half-drowned hill of the Deluge." On three sides of it the cliffs rise sheer and precipitous out of the sea; and there is only one landing-place —a shelf of rock on the south-west, which is overlooked by the ruined castle. This structure dates as far back as the year 1405. Landing on the Bass is difficult; indeed, except in calm weather, it is almost impossible. A cave tunnels the rock from end to end, cutting it through, like a deep wound. There is grass enough upon the island to support a few sheep; but the chief inhabitants are solan geese and innumerable other sea-fowl, which give the rock a snowy appearance in the distance, and clamour constantly around it in concert with the wail of the waters. An old writer says—

> "The air was dirkit with the fowlis,
> That came with yammeris and with yowlis;
> With shrykking, skreeking, skrymming scowlis,
> And meikle noyis and showtis."

II

St. Baldred, a Culdee hermit and missionary, who lived in the seventh century, made his home upon the Bass Rock, and died there.

In the year 1671 King Charles II. bought the

Rock from Sir Andrew Ramsay to turn it into a fortress, and use it as a prison for the Covenanters. He paid for it the high price of £4000. During the next seventeen years thirty-nine of the most eminent men of the Covenant were confined within its dreary dungeons, for periods which ranged from a few months to more than six years. It has been said that the Bass is "almost the only prison which has seldom, if ever, enclosed *guilt*." Usually the people who are shut up in gaol are thieves and house-breakers, those who have committed forgery, and those who have been found guilty of murder; but the prisoners of the Bass were godly men. They were sent there by the Privy Council because they insisted upon having a mind of their own—different from that of the king—about matters of religion and worship. It was King Charles and his counsellors who were the real criminals; for they had no right to try to control the religious beliefs of the people. The Covenanters, who resisted the interference, were not criminals at all.

The dungeons of the castle on the Bass were very unwholesome. Some of the cells had only one small window, and this was placed at such a height above the floor that the prisoners could see neither earth nor sea nor sky. Other cells looked out upon a stone pavement; and here a sentry was always on duty, pacing up and down the pavement, and watching the movements of those who

were confined within. In winter the dungeons were specially damp and cold, and also full of stifling smoke. Soon the health of the prisoners began to suffer, and some became ill of diseases from which they never recovered. It was a great relief when at any time they were permitted to go out into the open air, and take a walk along the cliffs of their island prison.

Yet, in spite of their solitude and all the discomforts of their captivity, the martyrs of the Bass had their happy moments. The same gracious Redeemer, who showed Himself in His glory to His suffering apostle on Patmos, was present among them with the comforts of His Holy Spirit. "Since I was a prisoner here," writes one, "I have dwelt at ease and lived securely. The upper springs flowed liberally and sweetly when the nether springs were embittered; and I have had the experience of that saying, 'Such is the sweetness of heaven's joys, that were the least drop of them to fall into hell, it would absorb all its bitterness.'"

III

Let me say just a word about one or two of the godly Covenanters who were confined in the Bass.

There Robert Gillespie, who was a great field-preacher, spent several dreary months.

There Alexander Peden, often called "Peden the Prophet," was confined for more than four years. We have a letter of his written from the Bass to Patrick Simpson, minister of Kilmacolm, Renfrewshire, in which he pictures the miseries of his captivity. In it he says: "We are close shut up in our chambers; not permitted to converse, eat, or worship together; but conducted out by two at once in the day, to breathe in the open air; envying, with reverence, the birds their freedom."

There was also Thomas Hog of Kiltearn, who took a serious illness in the loathsome "black hole" within which he was confined. He petitioned to be set at liberty, on account of his broken health; but instead he was dragged down to a dismal den, which he described as "a hideous cavern, arched overhead, dank and dripping, with an opening towards the sea, which dashes within a few feet below."

The last whom I shall mention was John Blackadder, a minister of the gospel and also a baronet, who was imprisoned in the Bass in the year 1681, and died there in the summer of 1686. Blackadder was buried in the churchyard of North Berwick, where a handsome old tombstone marks his grave. The inscription tells us that the vision of the eternal joy had cheered the martyr, as it did the Apostle John in Patmos, amidst the gloom and the distress of his captivity.

It has been well said that the Bass Rock is the most romantic of prison-houses. It is so both by reason of its remarkable natural situation, and also on account of its association with men such as those above named, of whom the world was not worthy. It is now a hallowed spot on the east coast of Scotland, as Iona, where Columba laboured, is on the west coast.

Byron the poet says in his sonnet on Chillon that that famous old castle on the Lake of Geneva is "a holy place," and "its sad floor an altar," because for six years it was the prison of a great man, whose name was Bonivard. But much more should the Bass Rock be thought of as a holy place by every Scottish Christian who knows its history. "My eyes fill as I gaze on it," said Hugh Miller. A halo encircles the brow of that rugged and stupendous rock at the mouth of the Forth. It is consecrated, while the world stands, as a Martyrs' Monument.

XXXI

"Manners Makyth Man"

"Who shall ascend into the hill of the LORD? or who shall stand in His holy place? He that hath clean hands, and a pure heart; who hath not lifted up his soul unto vanity, nor sworn deceitfully. He shall receive the blessing from the LORD, and righteousness from the God of his salvation."—Ps. xxiv. 3–5.

I

ONE of the most famous men of England in the fourteenth century was William of Wykeham. He was the son of a carpenter who lived in the obscure Hampshire village of Wickham, and he picked up the rudiments of education at a grammar school; but he grew up to be an able, and many-sided, and accomplished man, as well as one of eminent usefulness in many departments of life. He entered the king's service, and became both a notable statesman and a great churchman. He held many high offices. He rose higher and higher until he became Keeper of the Privy Seal, Bishop of Winchester, and Lord Chancellor of England. Indeed he attained to almost princely power. William has been called the "Father of the public school system." He founded Winchester

College, which is one of the great public schools of England; and also New College, one of the most famous of the Colleges in Oxford University. His pastoral staff of silver, adorned with fine enamels, is still carried before the Bishop of Winchester whenever he comes to visit New College.

William of Wykeham was also a distinguished architect. When a young man, he assisted King Edward III. in repairing and extending the royal castle at Windsor, and was of special service in the construction of the famous Round Tower there. He was also the architect of the great quadrangle which is another prominent feature of Windsor Castle, the building of which occupied ten years. More than this, he rebuilt the nave of Winchester Cathedral, established in England the style of architecture which is called "Perpendicular Gothic," made roads, built bridges, and regulated traffic on highways. It is said that Wykeham did all this without neglecting his spiritual work as a churchman. He must therefore have been a very extraordinary man—one of the greatest Englishmen of the Middle Ages.

Now for a little anecdote about him. When the work of extending Windsor Castle was completed, Wykeham as architect caused to be placed over the great gate this inscription in Latin words, "THIS MADE WYKEHAM." King Edward was displeased when he read the legend; for (taking

the word "Wykeham" as the nominative in the sentence) he understood it as a claim on Wykeham's part to all the honour and glory resulting from the great undertaking. William, however, explained to his Majesty that the word "Wykeham" in the inscription was not the nominative to the verb "made," but was in the objective or accusative case; and that the inscription on the gate meant this, that the successful work which he had done at Windsor Castle had raised Wykeham from a condition of poverty and obscurity to being the king's favourite architect. Even at the present time the inscription "HOC FECIT WYKEHAM" is to be seen on one of the walls of the part of the Castle which was designed by this distinguished man. And it reads truthfully whichever way we translate the words. It is equally true that "Wykeham made this," and that "This made Wykeham."

Not long after his work at Windsor Castle was done, when the heralds were looking about in search of material for his coat of arms, Wykeham himself gave them this as his motto, "MANNERS MAKYTH MAN." In that legend also, the closing word "man" is in the objective case. "Manners makyth Man" is still the motto of the famous public school at Winchester which was founded in the fourteenth century by the great architect, statesman, and bishop.

II

But what does this famous old motto mean? It is natural for us to judge that it refers to what we call "good manners"—that is, politeness of conduct, or a pleasing outward deportment. And there is no doubt that courtesy beautifies character, and helps greatly to success in life. It is also true that "Courtesy is the sister of love," and that, as Tennyson has said—

> "Manners are not idle, but the fruit
> Of noble nature and of loyal mind."

Or, in the words of Archdeacon Paley, "Bad manners are bad morals." A white soul will reveal its purity in gracious speech and actions which show consideration for others. A sterling and strong character does not do itself justice when it is joined with rough and ungentle manners. On the other hand, a person may be outwardly polite, and to all appearance courteous, whose habits and character are very far away from being pure and noble. It is too much to say that what we call "good manners" "make man"; for it is what is in the mind and heart and soul that does that.

The word "manners," however, has another meaning. When I consult a good English dictionary I find that it means also conduct, morals, character, habits of life. It was in this sense, doubtless, that William of Wykeham used

the word. He wanted to say to his countrymen, by means of the motto on his coat of arms, that a man's real worth is to be estimated,—and Wykeham's own worth, amongst the others,—not by the outward accidents of birth and rank and fortune, but by the attainments of his mind and his moral qualities. It has sometimes been said of the Bible as a divine book that it is "the only infallible rule of faith and manners"; and the word "manners" here means moral conduct. The Word of God tells us how we may live a true, and pure, and beautiful life; and it presents the character of the Man Christ Jesus as the perfect example which we ought to follow. It teaches us that it is a sound moral character that "makyth man."

A man is "made" by the cultivation of right principles within his heart, such as truth, justice, honour, love. That is what the motto of the famous old school at Winchester teaches; so it is not a frivolous legend at all. It is a grand saying; it sets forth an important truth. It reminds us that he only is a worthy specimen of a man who is careful to have clean hands, a pure heart, and a truthful tongue. It is upon those whose character is true and genuine that God's blessing comes down.

Not one of us by nature is either outwardly clean or inwardly pure. But if we join ourselves to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Son of God and the

Son of Man, He will bring us to the God of salvation. The Holy Spirit will take up His abode within our hearts, and will renew them from day to day. He will help us more and more to do what is right, and so make worthy men of us.

XXXII

No Room for Jesus

"There was no room for them in the inn."—LUKE ii. 7.

SHENSTONE, one of our English poets, has said in some lines which he wrote on the window of an inn at Henley, that, of all places in the world, that is the kind of place where a traveller gets "the warmest welcome." His words are—

> "Whoe'er has travelled life's dull round,
> Where'er his stages may have been,
> May sigh to think he still has found
> The warmest welcome at an inn."

Similarly, Dr. Samuel Johnson once remarked to Boswell, "Sir, there is nothing which has yet been contrived by man by which so much happiness is provided as by a good inn."

But this was not the experience of Joseph and Mary on the night when Jesus was born. When they reached the inn at Bethlehem where travellers were accustomed to sleep, they found that others had got there before them, and that there was no room to spare. But near the inn was a cave

which was used as a stable; and to go in there was much better than staying out on the roadside. So the Child Jesus was born in that stable, and laid in a manger that was there.

I ought to mention, however, that even if Mary's Son had been born within the inn at Bethlehem, His mother and He would not have received much more attention that night than they did in the stable. For a Syrian inn in Bible times was by no means like a modern hotel—with a landlord, and waiters, and chambermaids, and rooms that are kept warm and comfortable. It was only a khan or caravansary—a public unfurnished shelter from the weather in which travellers might pass the night, each party arranging for its own comfort as best it might.

There are some inns everywhere yet—inns of the modern kind—in which there is not much room for the Lord Jesus Christ. But even those that do have regard to Him and His will, of which there are many in every Christian country, are not thought of by the guests who visit them as they think of their homes. An inn is suitable only for the wayfaring man, who turns into it to tarry for a night. The gentle Archbishop Leighton used to say to his friends that an inn was the place where he would like best of all to die; for there and then he would feel like a pilgrim who was going home. And, wonderful to say! God gave the good man his desire. In 1684,

when on a visit to London, he died suddenly at the Bell Inn, Warwick Lane.

When Jesus was born at Bethlehem "there was no room for them in the inn"; very soon, too, there was no room in the village itself, and no safety in the whole land of Israel. And, alas! although He is not a Babe now, and it is more than nineteen hundred years since He was born, He is still suffering from want of room.

I

CHRIST WANTS ROOM IN THE WORLD.

This is His own world, for it was He who made it. People did not know who He was when that tiny Baby, with open wondering eyes, was laid in the manger, on the soft hay, in the tight swathing-bands. Next morning men awoke, and went about their business; the crowded inn was again filled with bustle and movement, and no one troubled to look in to see the little Baby in the manger. He lay in silence on the hay, with Mary and Joseph, and the meek-eyed oxen, for His only companions.

But even after people did know, or should have known, who He was, they did not make room for Him. The righteous persons made Him over to the sinners; Judea left Him to Galilee, and Israel to the heathen. That Child born in the stable was the Hope of Israel, and the Desire of all

nations. Yet His own brothers, brought up at Nazareth under the same roof with Him, did not, at least at first, believe in Him. His fellow-townsmen rejected Him, "and thrust Him out of the city." His countrymen the Jews refused to receive Him as the Messiah. "He came unto His own" possessions, "and His own" people "received Him not." Jesus became a homeless and a weary Man. He could say, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have roosting-places; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." By and by scribes and Pharisees, priests and people, refused to allow Him to live any longer, and drove Him out of the world altogether, as One who was accursed.

More room in His own world is still the Redeemer's chief want. How slow the teeming millions of China and India are to make room for Him! The churches send out missionaries to the heathen to induce them to put away their idols of wood and stone, and thus to prepare the way of the Lord. Nations go to war with one another because they have not yet given Christ enough of room in their national life. Employers of labour and their workmen sometimes pull different ways, and resort to strikes or lock-outs, because the Lord Jesus is not getting room in the world's business life.

But the Bible tells us that the time is coming when the world will make room for Christ in

every department of its affairs. "He shall have dominion also from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth." His Father says to Him, "Ask of Me, and I shall give Thee the heathen for Thine inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for Thy possession." When that good time arrives, the hoarse dull drum will sleep, and man will be happy yet.

II

Christ wants Room in our Homes.

In the midst of all the babel of our life, which roars around us in this twentieth century, what a blessed thing is the quiet refuge of the family home, and how loving is the welcome that greets us there! But, unless the Lord Jesus Christ Himself is the real Head of the house, and the Husband [house-band] in the family, the house is not in the truest sense a home—but a mere lodging, only an inn. It needs His presence to make it a home. The right kind of family feeling reigns only where the members of the family love Him. Without this, the house will be little better than a stable, with a certain number of stalls in it, which shelter and feed so many human animals. The family meal will be like a *table d'hôte*, at which there is no intimate communion of soul with soul; and the servants in the house will be hirelings only, like the waiters at an inn.

We are apt constantly to forget that we owe our happy Christian homes to Jesus Christ. It is His Gospel that makes family life pure and beautiful. In heathen lands there is very little home life that is worthy of the name. But Christ has come "to turn the hearts of the fathers to the children"—to restore family affection, and make the fireside the abode of love. In this department of life, as in all others, He is our Pattern. What a dutiful Son He was to Mary and Joseph! How tender was His care for His venerable mother during His own agony upon the cross! The Gospels tell us of His presence at the marriage feast in Cana; and also how He took the little children in His arms, and blessed them. If we also receive the Redeemer into our homes, and take care to give Him plenty of room there, home will be to us the sweetest place in the world, for it will be the abode of unselfish Christian love. And that is what is needed to make home happy.

III

Christ wants Room in our Hearts.

He desires to come to us, and make His abode with us, that He may work within our hearts the salvation which His love has purposed. He longs to dwell within us, because it is His presence that our hearts need. He, and He alone, is able to cleanse them, and guard them, and fill them.

Some people, sad to say, refuse to give Him any room at all. They are too busy minding earthly things to receive the Redeemer. They treat Him with indifference, and turn Him away, because their hearts are preoccupied by idols. Here is a grown-up person whose heart is full of the love of money. There is a young man whose whole soul is taken up with his games and pastimes. Yonder is a young lady who can think about nothing better than her own personal adornment. Jesus knocks at the door of these hearts in vain. There is no room in them for anything that comes from Him.

Even many of the Lord's own people give Him too little room within their hearts. We are tempted scarcely to think about Him at all except on His own Day, which comes round once a week. On the other days we make room enough for business and for pleasure, but very little room for religion. Many people allow the greater part of their life to be filled up with a shop or an office; at the end of which they have built a very small chapel, which occupies only a seventh part of the site. They wait until the evil days come before they seek to have constant intercourse with Jesus, and to secure room for Him by putting away everything that ought not to be under the same roof with Him.

It is the hearts in which Christ abides, and that make plenty of room for Him, that enjoy a

perpetual feast. He says, "If any man hear My voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with Me."

> "Admit Him, for the human breast
> Ne'er entertained so kind a Guest;
> No mortal tongue their joys can tell
> With whom He condescends to dwell."

Let not the boys and girls turn Jesus away from the door of their hearts, as if He were a beggar, or as if they think that they can do without Him. Rather let them say, "Come in, Thou blessed of the Lord; wherefore standest Thou without?" Only by giving Jesus plenty of room inside will our hearts be happy.

XXXIII

Envy

"Ephraim shall not envy Judah, and Judah shall not vex Ephraim."—ISA. xi. 13.

EPHRAIM means here the Kingdom of Israel, or of the Ten Tribes; and Judah means the Southern Kingdom, that of the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. David and Solomon succeeded in keeping all the Twelve Tribes united in one kingdom; but on the death of Solomon the Ten Northern Tribes threw off the yoke of his son and successor, Rehoboam, and became a separate kingdom.

This disruption was the result of evil feelings which had existed for centuries. The two strongest tribes were Ephraim and Judah, and each of them desired to take the leading place. They were rivals; each was jealous of the other, because they were so evenly matched in power and influence. A weak tribe like Simeon was not jealous of either Ephraim or Judah.

Moses, during the forty years' wanderings in the wilderness, had trouble sometimes with the

bickerings of these two tribes. He took care to appoint each of them to a post of honour; for, when the Israelites were on their journeys, it was the rule that Judah should lead the van, and that Ephraim (or Joseph) should guard the rear. The other Ten Tribes marched between these two; and so Judah and Ephraim were kept as far apart as possible from each other.

When the people reached the Promised Land, Judah, because it was the more numerous tribe, received the larger inheritance. But Ephraim occupied the central and the choicest region of the country. King David, however, made Jerusalem his capital; and, after that, the Tribe of Ephraim sank to the second place. Ephraim envied Judah; and by and by, the other tribes having taken sides, the nation split into two rival kingdoms.

I

Human nature is weak and sinful, and therefore the world is everywhere full of envy and jealousy.

What a fierce rivalry there was for hundreds of years between ancient Rome and Carthage, until in the second century before Christ Carthage was destroyed! In modern times has not France been often absurdly jealous of Germany, and the United States of America sometimes a little too sensitive about the continued prosperity of the mother country? Sometimes unholy envy still

cleaves a Christian nation into two, as it did the Hebrew nation long ago. In England during the fifteenth century there were the famous Wars of the Roses, between the House of York and the House of Lancaster. In Scotland during part of the eighteenth century Highlands and Lowlands were divided on the question of the restoration to the throne of the Stuart line of kings.

Neighbouring cities are sometimes rivals. Some Glasgow people speak of Edinburgh, partly in jest and partly in earnest, as "an east-windy, west-endy place"; or they say that "if Edinburgh is the capital, Glasgow *has* the capital"—that is, the larger amount of wealth. The prison of the town of Paisley, in Renfrewshire, is a fine castellated building close to the railway station. It is not much used now; but in the days when it was a county gaol a stranger once asked a Paisley man what building that was. "It is Paisley College," the man answered; "but," he added, "most of the students come from Greenock."

The successful man in the work of life is envied. When the women of Israel, as the troops returned from battle, met them with music and dancing, and sang in honour of the victory, "Saul hath slain his thousands, and David his ten thousands," the words were evil in the king's ears; and we read that "Saul eyed David from that day and forward." Themistocles, the great Athenian general and statesman, was a bitter rival of

Aristides, surnamed "the Just"; and he actually persuaded the citizens to banish him, on the ground that it was a danger to the State that any person should be allowed to possess so much influence as Aristides had. It is said that an ignorant fellow, who did not know Aristides, came up to him, and, handing him his voting shell, requested him to write upon it the name of Aristides. The latter asked whether Aristides had done him any wrong. "No," replied the voter; "I do not even know him, but I am weary of hearing him everywhere called 'the Just.'"

In business life there is sometimes no love lost between rival tradesmen. A familiar proverb says, "There's aye an ill-will among cadgers"—that is, among hawkers. Even the partners in a Punch and Judy show may share this ill-will; and the one partner may say about the other, behind his back, "Codlin's the friend, remember—not Short."

Jealousy is even worse among professional men than it is among merchants. While many such, of course, are perfectly genial and kind towards one another, others live a cat-and-dog life; they pull together badly now and then, as Ephraim and Judah did. In the eighteenth century the medical world was adorned by the two brothers Hunter—John, a brilliant surgeon, and William, a great anatomist. The Hunterian Museum in Glasgow is a memorial of William Hunter, and the Hunterian Collection in London a memorial of

the still greater brother. The two brothers, both men of genius, had no intercourse for many years, owing to a dispute between them as to which of them it was that had made certain discoveries. Happily they became reconciled to each other while William was on his deathbed.

The same bad spirit is sometimes shown in Church life. Why was it, for example, that the chief priests and elders of the Jews accused Jesus so unjustly before Pilate, the Roman Governor? It is said in the Gospel narrative that Pilate "knew that for envy they had delivered Him." The priests and scribes coveted the immense influence which Jesus had as a religious Teacher; and they feared the loss of their own power over the people should that influence continue. They were the victims of "an evil eye."

Even in the bosom of families, and at the fireside, where all ought to be love, there is sometimes the same wickedness. It was the envy of Cain that led him to murder his brother Abel. It was the same bad spirit in the heart of Joseph's brethren that prompted them to sell Joseph into slavery. It was envy on the part of Aaron and Miriam that led them one day boldly to object to the pre-eminence of Moses.

Sometimes boys and girls, in their school life, are guilty of the same sin. Within the school there may be envy of the prize-winners; and in the playground, of those who are first in the games.

Everywhere in the world envy abounds. It is a deadly sin, and it is always at work. It "takes no holidays." "Who is able to stand before envy?"

II

The Prophet Isaiah is speaking in this chapter about the reign of the Messiah, and the blessedness which that reign will bring to its subjects. He says that when the kingdom of God triumphs, envy and jealousy will depart out of the hearts of men. The ancient rivalry of Judah and Ephraim will be at an end, and all will be harmony and love.

What can you and I do, in the meantime, to promote the coming of that happy time? Here is a double remedy for envy in one's own heart—two prescriptions, which ought both to be taken at once.

1. *Think much about your mercies.* Envious persons compare themselves in an unkindly way with those who are more successful than themselves, forgetting all the while that there are many who are less successful. It will do us good sometimes to think rather of them. If I visit a workhouse some day, I should feel thankful that I am not so poor as to require to live there. If I pass through the wards of an infirmary, it should make me feel grateful and contented to think of my own good health. If I am a believer in Christ, I am

the possessor of "all things," and it is therefore unreasonable that I should envy any one.

2. *Seek a renewed heart.* The natural heart is evil, and it leads us to envy and grieve at the good of our neighbour. Envy is one of "the Seven Deadly Sins." But the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, if we ask Him, will give us a new heart. The Holy Spirit will help us to entertain lowly thoughts of ourselves, and to learn to admire what is good in others.

"He that is down needs fear no fall;
He that is low, no pride:
He that is humble ever shall
Have God to be his Guide.

I am content with what I have,
Little be it, or much:
And, Lord, contentment still I crave,
Because Thou savest such."

XXXIV

St. John and the Robber

"If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins."—1 JOHN ii. 1, 2.

JOHN the Apostle was the last survivor of the Twelve. He lived to an extreme old age, and is believed to have been at least a hundred years old when he passed away. During his later years he laboured much in the Gospel at Ephesus in Asia Minor, the famous capital of the rich Roman province of Asia. He was banished thence to Patmos, in the Ægean Sea; and while there he wrote the Book of Revelation. After his return from his exile he resumed his labours at Ephesus, and in the whole region round about.

Quite a number of interesting traditions cluster round the closing years of the apostle's life. It is said that he used to find pleasure in the playfulness of a tame partridge, which nestled in his breast and loved his caresses. Jerome tells us that when he was so infirm that he had to be carried to church in a litter, and was too weak to preach, he

used often to repeat the words, "Little children, love one another"; and when asked why he kept on saying only these words, he answered, "Because it is the Lord's command, and if this is done it is enough." Still more touching, however, is the story which is told by Clement of Alexandria, one of the Fathers of the Christian Church, which shows the loving interest of the aged apostle in the younger members of his flock, and the courage which he showed in bringing back one of them from the evil life into which he had fallen. Miss Charlotte M. Yonge, in her attractive book, *The Pupils of St. John the Divine*, has given an excellent setting to this tradition of the apostle and the outlaw chief.

I

The story is that on his arrival at one of the cities not very far from Ephesus, John's attention was attracted by a lad of winning countenance and noble bearing, with whom he conversed, and whom he encouraged to seek pardon and peace, and strength to live the Christian life. He presented the young man to the bishop or presbyter of the city, saying to him, "I intrust to thee this youth with all earnestness, calling Christ and the Church to witness." The bishop accepted the trust, and made the necessary promises. When the apostle returned to Ephesus, the bishop took the young man home with him, gave him special Christian

instruction, watched over him, and by and by—on his profession of faith—baptized him.

All went well with the new convert for a time. But, unhappily, the bishop began to relax his watchful care over him. Meanwhile, too, the youth found that the lusts and passions of the natural man within him had not passed away. Some idle companions of his own age, who were familiar with evil, began to lead him astray into forbidden paths. He went from bad to worse—from heathen banquetings to the wicked deeds of the felon. A sharp rebuke from the bishop only seemed to harden him, and drive him into further excesses. At last he abandoned all decency, gathered his worst comrades about him, fled from the city, and became the chief of a set of bandits.

Not long afterwards the Apostle John revisited the place. Having set other things in order, he said to the bishop with reference to the young man who had so greatly attracted him, "Where is that deposit which the Saviour and I gave to thy keeping?" At first the bishop did not understand the question, for he had received no money from the apostle. Then John said, "I demand back the young man, the soul of a brother." So the painful story had to be told. The bishop said, "He is dead to God. He has become wicked and desperate, and, to sum up all, a brigand; he has gone to the mountains, with followers like himself."

Then said the apostle with a loud distressful wail, after rending his robe and smiting his head, "A fine guardian of our brother's soul did I leave! Give me a horse and a guide."

II

John rode off at once, as he was, to the district that was infested by the bandits, and presently arrived at their outposts, on one of the steep slopes of a wild ravine. He had not long to wait before the robbers pounced upon him. In the words of Miss Yonge: "Forth rushed, with threatening cries, a horde of wild-looking men, with streaming hair, loose white kilts, and bare feet; some with the short Roman sword, some with a long lance, and some farther off with bows and arrows levelled against that one old man. They took rudely from him his horse, and bound his guide; but when they saw that he only stood still and smiled a kindly greeting to them, they paused in wonder. He waved his hand, and bade them take him to their captain; and there was an authority in his manner, a dignity in his bearing, that, though he was clad in homely garments, overawed them, so that they scarcely spoke as they guided him to an open space of grass, where there sat, on horseback, a tall, handsome young man, bravely equipped with the bright helmet, breastplate, and spear of a warrior."

When the chief recognised the venerable apostle he was struck with shame, and turned his horse to flee. But the old man went after him, and entreated him to stay. He cried out, "Why, my son, dost thou flee from thine own father, unarmed, aged as he is? Pity me, my son, fear not; thou hast still a hope of life. I will give account to Christ for thee, if need be. I will willingly abide thy death; the Lord endured the death on our behalf. For thy sake I will give in ransom my own soul. Stay! believe! The Lord Jesus Christ sent me."

On hearing these words the young robber-captain threw himself from his horse, dropped upon the ground, flung away his arms, and laid his forehead in the dust in an agony of shame. The old man, by his loving tears and entreaties, won him to penitence, and induced him to return with him to the Church. The outlaw chief had at first hidden away his right hand from the apostle, because it had dealt many cruel blows and was defiled with much blood; but the aged saint, getting hold of it, covered it with kisses, as having been cleansed by true repentance.

In due time the fair and comely young man, who had fallen so low, was restored to the bosom of the Church, never again to depart out of the narrow way. His recovery was due to the anxious care for his soul that had been shown by the great apostle—a care which had led him to brave

the very greatest danger in order to rescue him from the dominion of evil. And as for the young man himself, he must surely to the very end of his life have rejoiced in the great gospel truth which the Apostle of Love has thus expressed in his First Epistle: "If any man sin, we have an Advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous: and He is the propitiation for our sins."

XXXV

"This Way and that Way"

"And he looked this way and that way, and when he saw that there was no man, he slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand."—Ex. ii. 12.

I

MOSES was a great patriot, and it was his burning love for his oppressed countrymen that led him to kill this man. It was bad enough that "the people of God" should have been made public slaves by Rameses II.; Moses could not bear to see this Egyptian smiting "an Hebrew, one of his brethren." And we cannot but admire him for his patriotism, especially as he had been brought up in the palace of the Pharaoh, and might have occupied, had he been so minded, almost the highest place in the land of Egypt.

But did Moses do right or wrong when he slew the Egyptian? Some have judged that he acted quite rightly and legally; and they quote in support of their opinion an old Egyptian law, which said that "he who saw a man being murdered or violently assaulted on the highway,

and made no effort to rescue him, though it was in his power, was himself liable to be punished with death." But this law, doubtless, would only refer to assaults upon freemen; and, in the case before us, the person who was being ill-treated was a slave. Perhaps, too, the Egyptian who smote the Hebrew was his overseer or taskmaster; and, if it were so, there would probably be no law to forbid him from doing so.

The way in which the story is told here, and also the way in which Moses did the deed, both seem to show that this was a wrong action, although it was done by a good man. The words at the beginning of the verse, and also the words at the end, make it plain that Moses knew he was doing what was wrong in taking this man's life.

II

Take first the opening words. "He looked this way and that way," to make sure, if he could, that no human eye should see what he was going to do. Then, thinking himself unobserved, in a hasty outburst of passion he slew the Egyptian.

Moses looked before and behind, or to the right hand and the left; but there were other two directions in which he did not look. He forgot to look inward, and he neglected to look upward.

He did not turn his eyes *inward*. In killing the oppressor of his brother Israelite, Moses forgot the

duty of seeking in everything to have a conscience void of offence both toward God and toward men. He did not reflect that he would soil and burden his own soul by doing such a deed, seeing he had no sufficient warrant for doing it. That was a well-principled boy—a boy, too, who was in the habit of looking inward—who, when he was asked why he did not pocket some pears which did not belong to him, although nobody was there to see, replied, "Yes, there was: I was there to see myself; and I don't intend ever to see myself do a dishonest thing."

And Moses did not look *upward*. He did not ask God what He would have him to do. His act was impulsive, rash, passionate. It was not done calmly, and under a settled sense of duty to God. It was the "old man" in Moses that slew the Egyptian, and not the "new man." And the Lord punished Moses for his error. Having learned that what he had done had become known, and even to the Pharaoh himself, Moses fled to the desert of Midian, and remained an exile there for forty years. His smiting the Egyptian, therefore, was a weak blow, although given in the good cause of Hebrew emancipation.

Had Moses looked inward and upward, he would not have needed to look the two ways in which he did look. Duty does not look backwards and forwards. It looks within to the conscience, and it looks up to God. It does not do things in

a passion. The native soldiers used to say about Sir Henry Lawrence, at the time of the Indian Mutiny, that "when he looked twice up to heaven, once down to the earth, and then stroked his beard, he knew what to do." It was also said of George Müller of Bristol, that "prayer for direct Divine guidance in every crisis, great or small, was the secret of his whole career."

III

Consider now the closing words of the verse. These also show that Moses knew he was doing wrong. "He slew the Egyptian, and hid him in the sand." The killing of the man was murder. It was a deed suitable for the darkness, something that needed to be concealed. Like any vulgar murderer, Moses dug a hole in the sand of the desert, and covered up the corpse of his victim.

But it is always a dreadfully hard thing to hide a dead body, so that no one shall ever find it, or know what has become of it. The experience of murderers is that this is almost impossible. "Murder will out." Eugene Aram, in Tom Hood's poem, first cast the body of his victim into a pool in a river, but soon the stream became dry; after that he covered it with leaves, but the leaves refused to lie on it—the breeze kept blowing them away, leaving the corpse exposed to view. It is part of the proof of the resurrection of Jesus

Christ that His dead body was never found. If the body was stolen away by His disciples while the Roman guards were asleep, how did the disciples contrive to dispose of it? We do not certainly know how the killing of the Egyptian was discovered. But we are told that on the very next day Moses was reproached for the manslaughter. It may have been that the dead body was found. It may have been that some one witnessed the scene, notwithstanding the precautions of Moses in looking this way and that way. Probably, however, the Israelite in whose behalf Moses interfered found it impossible to keep silence about the matter. If he told his brother slaves, soon it might reach the ear of one of the taskmasters, and by and by be told to the Pharaoh himself.

This reminds us that it is impossible to hide a sin. At least, if the evil deed is concealed from one's fellow-men, it cannot be hidden from God. He looks straight down into the heart of our innermost thoughts. "All things are naked and opened unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." The day is coming when He will blow away the sand, or the leaves, and show what we have hidden underneath.

There is only one way of getting rid of sin—only one way of hiding our past transgressions, and of preventing future ones. We hide our past sins by coming to Jesus Christ, washing in His

blood, and clothing ourselves with His righteousness. And we prevent future ones by admitting His Holy Spirit into our hearts, to deliver us from the mind of the flesh, and to enable us "so to walk even as He walked."

XXXVI

The Great Fiery Dragon

"Behold, a great red dragon."—REV. xii. 3.

I

WHAT kind of beast is a dragon? It is natural to ask this question, because none of the boys or girls has ever seen one. The answer is, that the dragon is a fabulous animal, found only in myth and legend, and not in real life. Its name comes from a Greek verb which means to *look* or *see*: the dragon is so called because of its fiery eyes. It has been thought of as a combination of serpent and crocodile, but with wings also. It is large in size, blood-red in colour, with crested head, flaming eyes, and huge claws. It is always athirst for human blood, and every now and then it spouts fire.

The "great red dragon" is one of the three wild and evil beasts that appear in the Book of Revelation as the enemies of the cause of God in our world. These enemies are a caricature of the Three Persons of the Holy Trinity. Over

against Father, Son, and Holy Spirit there appear the great dragon, the wild beast, and another beast who is also called "the false prophet." God the Father is the Father of Lights, and the God of Truth; while the dragon is the father of lies, and the ruler of the darkness of this world. The dragon of the last Book of the Bible is the same bad personage as the "Serpent" in the first Book. It was he who tempted our first parents in the garden of Eden. Other Bible names for him are the *Devil*, which means slanderer, and *Satan*, which means enemy.

In *The Holy War*, one of his famous allegories, John Bunyan makes the giant Diabolus (that is, the Devil) approach the town of Mansoul in the form of a dragon. And in *The Pilgrim's Progress* he selects another name for him from this Book of Revelation — Apollyon, which means the Destroyer. Bunyan says: "So Christian went on, and Apollyon met him. Now the monster was hideous to behold: he was clothed with scales like a fish; he had wings like a dragon, feet like a bear, and out of his belly came fire and smoke, and his mouth was as the mouth of a lion."

We read of the dragon in the myths and legends of many nations. The ancients thought of this fabulous monster as the enemy of the human race; and its overthrow figures amongst the greatest exploits of the gods and heroes of heathen

mythology. Traces of dragon worship remain until the present day; as, for example, in the dragon represented on the Chinese flag, and the figures of dragons on coins, pictures, and sculptures. The ancient Persians thought of Mithras, the sun-god, as overcoming his rival, the dragon Ahriman. One Greek myth tells how Apollo slew the great serpent Pytho, near Delphi; and another how Perseus rescued Andromeda from the sea-monster. A dragon watched the garden of the Hesperides, and its destruction formed one of the labours of Hercules. There is a legend connected with Fraoch, a small island in Loch Awe, Argyllshire, that delicious apples grew there, which a lover got for his sweetheart by destroying a terrible serpent that kept guard over them. Sigurd, the hero of a Norse legend, vanquished one dragon; and St. George, in the Christian myth, killed another.

There is also the history of the destruction of *Bel* [Baal] *and the Dragon*, which is one of the books of the Old Testament Apocrypha, and an appendix to the Book of Daniel. This writing contains two legendary anecdotes about Daniel. According to the second, that prophet broke in sunder the sacred dragon that was worshipped at Babylon; he was on that account cast for six days by the Babylonians into the lions' den, but the lions did not touch him; the Prophet Habakkuk was at once transported from Judea by the angel of the Lord to carry him food; and

on the seventh day the king released Daniel, and put his enemies to death.

II

It is more important, however, to consider what this inspired Book of Revelation tells us about the dragon. It describes him as the great enemy both of God and of God's people—the dark, cunning, and malignant spirit of evil.

In the beginning of this twelfth chapter we see the dragon watching for the birth of the Redeemer, that he might destroy Him in His cradle. This leads us to remember that Herod the Great, acting as an agent of the dragon, sought to kill the Holy Child, for he judged that the existence of Jesus might be a danger to his own throne. And, when he could not find Him, the cruel tyrant caused all the little baby boys in Bethlehem to be massacred, hoping that the Child Jesus would be among them. But the Heavenly Father took care to remove His dear Son out of Herod's way; and after the work of the Redeemer on earth was done, He went up into heaven itself; He "was caught up unto God, and to His throne."

Then, when the cruel dragon could no longer get at Christ, to try to harm Him, he resolved to do all the ill that he could to Christ's people. His habit is to lay snares for them, and attack them, and persecute them. He has done this now for nineteen hundred years. "The Devil is come

down unto them, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time."

This Book of Revelation tells us of the overthrow and the final destruction of the dragon. In his punishment there are three stages.

First of all, he and his angels were long ago cast out of heaven, never to enter it again. Banished from the presence of God, the dragon has become "the prince of this world," and seems to look upon the earth as a hunting ground, on which he may roam about at will, "seeking whom he may devour." He spends his time in opposing God, and in doing what he can to hinder the Gospel.

Secondly, the time is coming when the dragon shall be bound with fetters, and cast into the abyss, and shut in there, powerless and harmless, for a long period. John the Seer says in chapter xx.: "I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit and a great chain in his hand. And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan, and bound him a thousand years, and cast him into the bottomless pit." Here the Enemy gets as many different names as a gaol-bird—the Dragon, *alias* the Old Serpent, *alias* the Devil, *alias* Satan. But what a happy time it will be when God's people will be safe from his fiery darts, and in no danger from his wiles!

Lastly, after having been let loose for a short

time, the dragon shall be flung into the burning lake which was long ago prepared for him, to join the beast and the false prophet, who had been his companions in sin. And this will be his prison-house for ever. Satan will not reign in hell, as he has tried to do in this world. Hell, as the very word reminds us, is a *hole*, a pit, a pool. The pool of fire shall be the dragon's place of torment.

God is anxious that you and I should not be sharers of his punishment. Therefore apostles exhort us to "resist the Devil." And therefore also Christ our Saviour teaches us to pray, "Deliver us from the Evil One."

XXXVII

Satan's Activities

"And the LORD said unto Satan, From whence comest thou? And Satan answered the LORD, and said, From going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."—JOB ii. 2.

THIS passage also speaks of the Evil One. Satan means "the Adversary," and in Scripture the word is commonly applied to the personal spirit of evil, the enemy of all good, and the original author of every kind of wickedness and of temptation to sin. This being is called in the Bible by a variety of names. Satan is a Hebrew word; and the Greek for it is Devil, this latter word also meaning calumniator or accuser. Then there are the names Apollyon, Beelzebub, Belial, the great red Dragon, the Serpent; and such titles as "the prince of this world," "the prince of the demons," "the prince of the power of the air," "the god of this world"; besides such common nouns marking character as "a murderer," "a liar," "the accuser of the brethren." In one verse, as I have said on a previous page, some of the names are strung together like the *aliases* of a habit-and-

repute criminal: "He laid hold on the Dragon, that Old Serpent, which is the Devil, and Satan."

It is Satan who tempts men to sin. We find him at the beginning of the Bible tempting our first parents to eat the forbidden fruit. By and by we read of him tempting King David proudly to number the people. Here we see him tempting Job to curse God. In the New Testament we read of Satan entering into Judas Iscariot, and persuading him to betray Jesus. We find him tempting Ananias and Sapphira to tell a black lie. We see him for forty days tempting our blessed Lord Himself.

I

HERE WE ARE REMINDED OF SATAN'S EVERY-DAY LIFE.

How does the Evil One spend his time? He himself tells us: "In going to and fro in the earth, and walking up and down in it." And why is he such a constant and unresting traveller? Ah! he scours the country, and walks about in the world, which he claims as his kingdom, not for pleasure, but out of mischief. Or, rather, to make mischief is Satan's pleasure.

Both our Lord in the Gospels, and His apostles in their writings, call upon us to be upon our guard against the visits of the Evil One. To the Apostle Peter the Devil was no phantom-figure in a legend, no dream of a sick man, but a real

person; and in one of his Epistles he warns the Churches accordingly. He says, "Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walketh about, seeking whom he may devour: whom resist steadfast in the faith." Peter himself had been nearly destroyed by Satan on the night of the trial of Jesus before the high priest in his palace, when he denied his Master with oaths and curses.

It is wrong to use any of the names of the Evil One in ordinary speech, unless it is done very seriously. Yet this form of profane swearing is extremely common. Some people call upon Satan, and send people to him, little thinking what a fearful thing this is to do.

There is a story told of the Reverend Walter Dunlop, Secession minister at Dumfries a hundred years ago, which sets forth how that gentleman tried to show to a swearer the absurdity of his bad words. Mr. Dunlop was accompanying a funeral one day, when he met a man driving a flock of geese. The waywardness of the flock was too much for the driver's temper, so he cried out, "Deil choke them!" Mr. Dunlop walked a little farther on, and passed a farm-steading where a servant was driving out some swine; and this man said, "Deil tak' them!" The minister was vexed to hear the swearing, and he rebuked it in this way. He stepped up to the farm-servant, and said, "Ay, ay, the gentleman 'll be wi' ye in a few

minutes; he's back the road there a bit, choking some geese to a man." Let us hope that the person to whom these words were spoken was led by them to reflect on the folly and sin of profane swearing.

II

HERE WE ARE LED TO THINK OF SATAN AT CHURCH.

We see him present in an assembly of "the sons of God." In this passage, of course, these are angels; but a gathering of men and women for the purposes of worship is also an assembly of God's children. The church is His house, and when we go to church we "present ourselves before the Lord." The Redeemer says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

But, when God's people come to His house, Satan comes also among them. He does not come to praise God, or to pray to Him: he comes to prevent as many people as he can from praying and worshipping.

I remember reading long ago a sermon by Charles H. Spurgeon, in which that great preacher drew a picture of Satan driving about in his carriage among the churches on the Lord's Day, and visiting some of them. He peeped into one place of worship, but returned at once to his carriage, and said to his coachman, "We needn't

go in there; it would only be a waste of time, for they do not require us. It is a small congregation —more pews than people; the minister is sleepy, and everything is very chilling. These people are doing well without us." Then he drove to another church where he found matters quite different. The pews were well filled, the singing was from the heart, the minister was filled with the Spirit, and many of the people were active Christian workers. And Satan saw at a glance that he had found an excellent sphere for mischief.

It is indeed true that wherever there is a worshipping Christian congregation, the Evil One is busy. Sometimes he goes into the pulpit, and the minister begins to think that he himself is very clever, and is preaching a specially eloquent sermon. Or he enters the pew of a prosperous merchant, and the merchant during the service keeps buying and selling and counting up his profits. Satan goes among the young men of the congregation, with the result that their thoughts are about yesterday's cricket or football. He goes among the girls, and tries to fill their heads with vanities. When the service is ended, and the people are dismissed, our Lord's words may be repeated regarding many a one: "Then cometh the Wicked One, and catcheth away that which was sown in his heart."

And during the whole of our life Satan is often near us. He is constantly seeking to "get an

advantage of us." We cannot by our own unaided efforts get away from him. What we must do is to allow the Lord Jesus Christ to have the keeping of our hearts. And we must daily breathe the prayer which He has taught us: "Bring us not into temptation, but deliver us from the Evil One."

XXXVIII

Saint Rollox

"There is . . . one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus."—1 Tim. ii. 5.

ONE of the divisions of the city of Glasgow is called St. Rollox. It is a somewhat grimy manufacturing region in the north-east part of the city, and it has a member of Parliament of its own. The famous chemical works of "Charles Tennant & Company" are in St. Rollox; and these works are distinguished by their great chimney-stalk, which is 435 feet high.

But not many people, even in Glasgow, know the origin of the name St. Rollox, or have ever taken the trouble to inquire what the name means. This I am going to tell my readers.

I

St. Rollox is a corrupted form of "St. Roch's," Roch being the name of one of the saints in the calendar of the Romish Church. The French form of the name is Roque, while in Italian it is Rocco. St. Roch is the patron saint of the

plague-stricken, and of those who are afraid of the plague. His day in the calendar is August 16th. He died on that day in the year 1327; and therefore devout Catholics are taught to thank God for him, and to pray to him, on that date in particular. St. Roch's day used also to be kept in England as a harvest-home festival day.

Roch was a native of the town of Montpellier, in the south of France, and was born in 1295. A church has recently been erected there in his honour, containing a statue of its patron. The name of the child's father was John, and that of his mother Franca or Libera. His parents were wealthy people. Roch was born with the mark of a red cross upon his breast, and this led his mother to expect that he would become a man of eminence. His father took care to give the boy the best possible education; and when he was twelve years of age he began to show many signs of deep piety. Roch's parents died when he was a young man of twenty; and as soon as he had buried them he parted with his estates, gave away all his property to the poor, and resolved to devote himself entirely to the service of God.

Therefore Roch put on the garb of a pilgrim, and set out for Rome. It happened that just at that time there was an epidemic of plague in North Italy. Roch offered his services to the governors of the public hospitals in one Italian town after another; and great blessing, it was

said, went with him in his labours among the plague-stricken. The Roman Catholic tradition is that by prayer and simple contact with the sick he accomplished many miraculous cures, and indeed that infection seemed to fly away before him.

After three years of similar ministries at Rome, however, Roch was smitten with the plague himself, when on his journey back to Montpellier. After nursing the sick at Piacenza he felt that he had caught the infection, and he would have perished in the forest had not the dog of a certain nobleman daily supplied him with bread. Recovering, he resumed his journey, and by and by reached his native town, but only to be arrested as a spy, and imprisoned. He died in the dungeon of the prison ; but not, it was said, until he had obtained from God this favour, that all plague-stricken persons who made use of his intercession should be healed.

When the devoted Roch died, he was aged only thirty-two years. In 1385 his remains were removed to Venice, and a large church, San Rocco, was erected for their preservation. The Church enrolled him among the saints. In course of time, too, so many fabulous stories gathered around his name, as the patron of the sick and the plague-stricken, that a countless number of churches, chapels, and hospitals came to be dedicated to him, especially in Italy, France, and Germany.

II

For nearly five hundred years before the Reformation, that is to say, from the time of St. Margaret, Queen of Malcolm Canmore, onwards, Scotland was an intensely Romish country. And at last the land of Wallace and Bruce came under the spell of St. Roch. About the very beginning of the sixteenth century, a French friar brought a bone of the saint to King James IV., as a sacred relic, and for this he was rewarded with fifteen French crowns. Near Edinburgh, accordingly, a chapel was built in honour of St. Roch (or St Roque, as the Edinburgh people called him), and the victims of the plague used to encamp in huts around it that they might be as close to the shrine as possible, in order to get the benefit of the saint's intercessions. The faint outlines of the site of this chapel can still be traced in the grounds of the mansion-house of St. Roque. Sir Walter Scott thus refers to the place in *Marmion*, as visited by James IV.—

> "Thus clamour still the war-notes, when
> The King to mass his way has ta'en,
> Or to Saint Katharine's of Sienne,
> Or Chapel of Saint Roque."

Near Glasgow, about the year 1505,—the year in which John Knox the Reformer was born,—a similar chapel was dedicated to St. Roch in the

Boroughmuir, to the north of the city, on the way to Cadder, and near the point where the Monkland Canal now crosses Castle Street. The chapel had a small cemetery attached to it, in which those were buried who died of the plague. At every outbreak of the pest the wretched victims left their homes in the narrow and filthy streets (for in those days no attention was given to cleanliness), hurried to the north gate of the city, and made their way out to the Chapel of St. Roch, to kneel before the shrine, and commit their case into the hands of the saint. The chapel was frequented for this purpose until 1560, the year of the Protestant Reformation, when it began to be deserted. It gradually became a ruin, and finally disappeared. The chapel had been called "St. Roch's," and that name, in course of time, was changed into St. Rollox.

In the eighteenth century Messrs. Tennant & Company acquired ground which included the site of St. Roch's chapel and cemetery, and erected on it the famous chemical works of St. Rollox. "Strange to think, is it not," says one, "that on the spot where were interred, more than two centuries previously, so many victims of the plague, chemical works should be erected for the manufacture of substances which act as disinfectants to purify the air, and to destroy germs of plague and fever? As we think of these alkali works, we might almost say that the chapel has

given place to the giant chimney in order to perpetuate the memory of St. Roch."

III

The Church of Rome worships dead men; that is, those among the departed whom she calls "saints." She does not indeed teach that the saints are gods, but only that they have great influence with God, and that we ought to address prayers to them, asking them to use that influence in our behalf. Individual saints, too, have their own particular limits of usefulness. St. Roch delivers from plague and pestilence, and St. Germane from apoplexy. St. Anthony the Abbot defends against fire, and St. Anthony of Padua against water. St. Francis is the protector of travellers, and St. Barbara ensures against thunder and lightning. St. Blaise cures disorders of the throat, and St. Lucia heals diseases of the eye. St. Eloy is entreated to take care of the horses, and St. Bride to preserve the cows and calves.

But we who are Protestant Christians do not believe in the prayers of saints. We can find no warrant in the Word of God for making out a catalogue of saints in heaven whom it will be for our advantage to ask to intercede for us. How can the Pope of Rome be perfectly sure that St. Roch is really in heaven, and that he is able to hear the prayers of mortals upon earth? Is

St. Roch, or St. Peter, or the Virgin Mary, at once omniscient and omnipotent? If the saints in heaven are not both, how can they hear what we say, and know what we desire, when they are at so great a distance from us? Men and women pray to them from Rome, from London, from New York, from Pekin, from Melbourne; and the saints are supposed to hear every one of these prayers. But to do so they must possess Divine attributes; and therefore the saints are really the gods whom their suppliants worship, and in whom they trust.

This form of idolatry is very dishonouring to the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer. He is the one Priest by whom we draw near to God. He can do for the sick and the distressed what St. Roch is powerless to do—intercede for them at the throne with success. "There is one God, and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus." When our Saviour was on earth He "went about doing good," healing the sick, opening the eyes of the blind, and cleansing the lepers. "Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses"; that is, He suffered with those whom He saw suffering, and His power to heal was connected with the strength and depth of His sympathy. We know, too, that when Jesus ascended to the throne of glory He took our human nature with Him. "He is able also to save them to the uttermost that come unto God

by Him, seeing He ever liveth to make intercession for them."

> "In every pang that rends the heart
> The Man of Sorrows had a part;
> He sympathises with our grief,
> And to the sufferer sends relief."

XXXIX

The Invisible Bird

"A bird of the air shall carry the voice, and that which hath wings shall tell the matter."—ECCLES. x. 20.

WHAT sort of bird is this? It is not one that any of us have ever seen. Nobody has seen it at any time. As some one has said, there is no specimen of it in any of the aviaries in the "Zoo"; neither is there any stuffed specimen to be found in any museum of natural history. This "bird of the air" is an invisible creature. It flies about silently in the dark and in the light. No one has ever caught it. And it never dies.

Let me tell you about three different varieties of this creature. There is—

I

THE SPY BIRD.

The first part of the verse leads us to think of him. When the sovereign of a country is a despot, and not a kind shepherd of the people, he is apt to be afraid of his subjects, lest they should rise up against him, or conspire to bring about his

ruin. So he employs spies to watch them secretly, and to find out what they are thinking and saying privately about him. Therefore the Wise Man gives this advice here, "Curse not the king, no not in thy thought; and curse not the rich in thy bedchamber."

In times of war, too, spies are sometimes used in order to find out the plans and watch the movements of the enemy, whether in the camp or in the field. In one of the wars between Israel and Syria we read that King Ben-hadad suspected that there was a traitor in his own camp, who made known his designs to Jehoram, the King of Israel. His servants, however, assured him that it was not so; all his retinue were loyal and true. And they added that it was Elisha the Prophet who was the spy bird. Being a seer, Elisha was able to detect Ben-hadad's secret plans: and he even repeated to the King of Israel the words that Ben-hadad spoke in his bedchamber, when the latter thought he was in complete retirement.

Hushai the Archite was a particular and faithful friend of King David; and during the rebellion of Absalom he acted as spy bird to the king. At David's request Hushai went back to Jerusalem, as if he was one of Absalom's servants; and was soon in a position to give such counsel to Absalom as to bring upon him confusion and defeat.

"A bird of the air shall carry the voice";

or, as the English proverb says, "Walls have ears."

It is possible, of course, that the Wise Man is thinking of the *homing pigeon.* For pigeons can be trained to carry messages. Anacreon was a famous Greek poet who lived in the sixth century before Christ; and one of his poems which has come down to us is his "Ode to a Pigeon." In this poem he makes the pigeon say—

> "Now I render service due
> To Anacreon, Master true,
> And I bear his billets-doux."

That is, "I carry his love-letters." Pigeons also were used in very ancient times as part of the police system of despots. And for thousands of years they have been employed in war to keep up communication between generals in the field. The pigeon post did good service during the siege of Ladysmith in 1899–1900.

In China at the present time there are fortune-tellers who have trained little birds to help them to carry on their business. When the fortune-teller is consulted he takes a bird from its cage, and puts it on a table upon which are arranged a large number of folded pieces of paper. The bird takes up one of these in its beak, and gives it to its master, who opens it and explains the verses that are written within.

II

The Remorse Bird.

This winged creature finds out the secrets of guilty deeds, and flies swiftly, telling all about them. If the spy bird reminds us that "walls have ears," the remorse bird says that "murder will out." Sometimes the murderer, after concealing his crime for years, discovers that his conscience will allow him to do so no longer; and therefore he goes and delivers himself up into the hands of justice.

There is an old Greek story which is quoted by Dean Plumptre as a good commentary on the words before us. Ibycus was a poet of Rhegium, and lived about the same time as Anacreon. He was travelling one day to Corinth, to attend a musical contest, when a band of robbers attacked him and murdered him. When his life was fast ebbing away, the dying man looked around to see if there were any witnesses of what had been done. Overhead was a flock of cranes flying high in the air, and Ibycus called on them to bear witness of the foul deed. The robbers laughed at this as an idle call. They had got their plunder, and they went with it to Corinth, and mingled with the crowd in the amphitheatre, a building which was open to the sky. Soon after the cranes appeared, and hovered over the heads of the multitude who were gathered there. One of the murderers, seeing the birds, betrayed himself by the terror-

stricken cry, "Behold, the avengers of Ibycus!" And this very soon afterwards gave the clue to the detection of the criminals; while the words, "The cranes of Ibycus," passed into a proverb among the Greeks. But of course it was not the cranes that told the matter: it was the remorse bird in the murderer's bosom.

Eugene Aram, the schoolmaster of Knaresborough in Yorkshire, could find no rest to his mind after he had murdered Daniel Clark, and hidden his body in St. Robert's cave. Tom Hood in his poem on the subject describes him as taking one of his scholars aside, and telling him how he had dreamed of having committed murder. This led to the schoolmaster being convicted of the crime. For he had not dreamed about it; he had actually done the deed. It was the remorse bird that suggested mention of it as if it had only been a dream.

Edgar Allan Poe, another poet, writes about the "raven" that came into his chamber at midnight one bleak December, and perched upon a bust above the door, and obstinately refused to go away—

"And the Raven, never flitting, still is sitting, still is sitting
On the pallid bust of Pallas just above my chamber-door;
And his eyes have all the seeming of a demon's that is dreaming,
And the lamplight o'er him streaming throws his shadow on the floor;
And my soul from out that shadow that lies floating on the floor
Shall be lifted—nevermore!"

The "raven" in this weird poem seems to refer to some heavy memory of past sin. Only the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer, can lift any human soul out of the shadow of guilt; and only His Spirit, the Holy Dove, can drive away that "raven."

III

The Scandal Bird.

Human nature is so fond of gossip, and especially of stories connected with the doings of people whom we know, that if an evil report about the character of any one is once started, it flies as quickly as if some winged messenger carried it. The story grows too, like a snowball, as it travels, and sometimes swells out until it is past recognition, as compared with what it was at first, and until it could not possibly be more absurd. Most of us have heard about "the three black crows."

Edward Fitzgerald, the poet, who lived at Woodbridge, in Suffolk, named his yacht *The Scandal*, because he thought that defamation of character travelled quicker than anything else in Woodbridge.

Sometimes a person will say, "A little bird told me so-and-so about Mr. A. B. C."; or, "Do you know what a little bird said to me this afternoon about Miss X. Y. Z.?" In some cases this is only innocent-looking gossip, which seems to do little or no harm; but in other cases, where the moral

character of those who are spoken about is concerned, it may be a scattering of "firebrands, arrows, and death." "The tongue is a little member, and boasteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth! And the tongue is a fire, a world of iniquity: so is the tongue among our members, that it defileth the whole body, and setteth on fire the course of nature; and it is set on fire of hell."

We ought all of us, young and old, to beware of the scandal-mongering little bird, which is such a firebrand of a creature. Let us not forget that it has keen eyes, and sharp ears, and a long memory. Let us never give it any food, or have anything to do with it. We are not obliged to listen to the wicked little thing, or to believe what it says about other people, especially if that is not to their credit. We must be careful that we do not hurt our neighbour in such a vital and such a tender place as his character. If we cannot say any good of our neighbours, it is best not to speak of them at all. By all means let us beware of the filthy little bird of scandal.

"Lord, who shall abide in Thy tabernacle? who shall dwell in Thy holy hill? He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his heart. He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour."

XL

Called to Higher Service

"A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand."—Ps. lxxxiv. 10.

"And he said unto him, Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities."—LUKE xix. 17.

OF the eight principal planets of our solar system, five are called *exterior* planets, because they are farther away from the sun than the earth is; and because, their orbits being wider, they seem to sweep round outside the earth, and make a complete tour of the heavens. Two, again, —namely, Mercury and Venus,—are called *interior* planets; that is, planets whose orbits are smaller, because they are between us and the sun, and because they appear to swing on either side of the sun.

At the times when they are on a line between the earth and the sun, Mercury and Venus are visible as black spots upon the sun's disc. This is called a "transit" of the one or other of these planets; that is, it is the passage of the planet exactly between us and the sun, so that it is seen

against the sun's face. A transit of Venus occurred in the year 1874; another took place in 1882; but the next will not happen till far on in the twentieth century. It is a great day among the astronomers when this event takes place.

I

The first observer of the transit of Venus was a very young clergyman of the Church of England. His name was Jeremiah Horrocks. He was born at Toxteth Park, near Liverpool, in 1619. Sir John Herschell calls him "the pride and boast of British astronomy"; and although he was only in the twenty-second year of his age when he died, his short career as a mathematician and astronomer was very wonderful. Horrocks made his great observation at the age of twenty, when he was curate in the rural parish of Hoole, seven miles from Preston, in Lancashire. Carr House, where he lived at the time, is about half a mile from the church, and is now used as a farmhouse.

During his six years as a student in Emmanuel College, Cambridge, when he was little more than a boy, Horrocks made researches on the tides, the moon, and the perturbations of the stars. He also corrected the astronomical tables of the great Kepler, and became convinced during the progress of his task that a transit of Venus, which Kepler had overlooked, would shortly take place. Sir

Isaac Newton would probably not have made so many brilliant observations had Horrocks not gone before him in the preceding generation.

After he had become curate of Hoole, Jeremiah Horrocks looked forward with eager interest to the transit, which he expected to occur on November 24th (Old Style), 1639. That day, unfortunately for him, was a Sabbath, when the curate had to conduct his two services in St. Michael's, the little village church. Although he did not expect the transit until three o'clock on the afternoon of Sunday, he carefully watched for it all Saturday. He did this alone in his little room, by means of a miserable half-crown telescope and a six-inch sheet of paper.

On Sabbath he conducted the morning service, probably at nine o'clock; and then he came back to his lodging, but found that there was still nothing to observe. He had to leave again at one o'clock to meet with his small afternoon congregation; "being called away," as he himself says in the Latin treatise which he wrote, "by business of the greatest importance, which for these by-studies I could not with propriety neglect."[1] This business of the highest importance was to conduct the public worship of his little handful of people. For Horrocks was a devout servant of the Lord Jesus Christ, and

[1] "Ad majora avocatus quæ ob hæc parerga negligi not decuit."—*Venus in Sole visa.*

cared more for the well-being of human souls than for the knowledge of the stars.

The afternoon service over, he returned from the church to his post of observation. And God rewarded him for his faithfulness to his duty as a minister. He writes in his book: "About fifteen minutes past three o'clock in the afternoon, the clouds, as if by Divine interposition, were entirely dispersed. I then beheld a most agreeable spectacle, the object of my most sanguine wishes—a spot of unusual magnitude, and of a perfectly circular shape, which had already fully entered upon the sun's disc on the left, so that the limbs of the sun and Venus exactly coincided." He watched the planet slowly travelling across the face of the sun for half an hour. Then the sun of that short winter day set, and he saw no more.

Happily Horrocks wrote down an account of his great astronomical observation in the book from which I have already quoted. I say, "happily," because in less than fourteen months thereafter he was dead and buried. He passed away unexpectedly on January 3, 1641. And for long he was forgotten by everybody except the astronomers. They, however, have always felt that it is difficult to over-estimate the value of the work which this gifted young man might have done, in increasing our knowledge of the stars, had his life been prolonged.

It was not until the year 1875—a good deal more than two centuries after his death—that a marble scroll in honour of Jeremiah Horrocks was placed in Westminster Abbey. This memorial is on the north side of the principal entrance to the Abbey, at the end of the nave. Part of the inscription consists of Horrocks' own words, "*Ad Majora Avocatus*" (that is, "called away to greater things"), which he had used in reference to his leaving his telescope to go to the sacred desk in the church.

II

These are the simple words of a simple-hearted Christian, who was also a man of very remarkable genius. But they are sublime as well as simple. They suggest two thoughts—the one as we meet with them in Horrocks' treatise, and the other when we read them as part of the inscription on the marble scroll in the Abbey. The first thought is this:—

1. *Public worship is a more important matter than one's ordinary work.* Jeremiah Horrocks thought of the services in his little church on the Lord's Day as of much more moment than his observation of a spectacle in the heavens. And this was his view although the sight which he desired to see was an extraordinary one, and of engrossing interest to astronomers. So he did not absent himself from church on that day and

get another clergyman to do duty for him. His studies about the stars were, as he himself said, the "by-works" of his life. They were ornamental, and nothing more. He could not make a by-job of his duties as a minister of Jesus Christ. These were the first thing with him; and he felt that he must put the first thing first, whether he should be permitted to observe the transit of Venus, or should miss seeing it.

Even so still, when we are present at public worship on the Lord's Day we are occupied with "greater things" than any of the work of the world that we were doing during the previous week, in school, or at home, or wherever we were. And it is happy for us if, like the Psalmist in the ancient Church, and like Jeremiah Horrocks, we can say to God as we worship Him, "A day in Thy courts is better than a thousand."

But another thought occurs as we read the words "*Ad Majora Avocatus*" on the memorial in Westminster Abbey, namely this:—

2. *There are higher activities before us in heaven than any we have here.* Horrocks, the devout astronomer and the godly minister, was early called away from this world to "greater things" in God's immediate presence—to higher work and to nobler worship. The Lord Jesus, his Redeemer, said to him, "Well, thou good servant: because thou hast been faithful in a very little, have thou authority over ten cities." We

are apt too much to think of the life of glory as a state of repose, and to speak of heaven as a place of rest. But we really ought not to expect that the heavenly life will be very different from the present, except of course that sin and sorrow will be absent from it. In glory the saints will have more to do than merely to sit on thrones, and sing hymns of praise. The Lord Jesus, in speaking about heaven in His public teaching, on no occasion represented human life there as an eternal rest. On the contrary, He speaks of heaven as a place of larger trusts and more weighty responsibilities. In the Parable of the Pounds He does not say to the man who has made his one pound ten pounds, "Enter into the rest which you have so well earned"; the man's reward is this, to be intrusted with the government of ten cities. Similarly, in the Parable of the Talents, He says, "Thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things." And Jesus promised His apostles, who had forsaken all to follow Him, that when He shall come again, and sit in the throne of His glory, they shall be exalted to royal dignity, and shall sit, each of them on his throne, to rule over the twelve tribes of Israel.

In this world, and during the present life, God's people are only apprentices. In heaven we shall use the working-power which we are now gaining here. "His servants shall serve Him: and they shall see His face."

Sir David Brewster, like Jeremiah Horrocks, was a famous natural philosopher; he applied his genius in particular to the subject of *light*, and made some great discoveries. Brewster was also, like Horrocks, a humble but decided Christian. On the stone, under the shadow of Melrose Abbey, which marks the spot where he lies, are the simple words of Scripture, "The Lord is my Light." And after he passed away to the heavenly country, the lines which some one wrote about him might have been written about Horrocks too—

"Doth he walk 'astonied' their lands of light?
Hath he found a hest for his spirit's might?
Hath he lifted a beacon in space unknown?
Hath he solved the hues of the prism'd Throne?
Hath he met with his peers of the elder days?
Hath he learned from the seraphs new meed for praise?
We see not, we see not, but *this* we know,
He hath bowed his head, with its honours, low.
'Not mine, not mine,' is his whisper meet,
As he casts his crown at his Saviour's feet."

XLI

The Trevi Fountain

"I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."—Rev. xxi. 6.

I

NO city has a more magnificent supply of water than the great city of Rome. Jerusalem is poorly off for water, and requires accordingly to store it up in large cisterns; but the water-supply of Rome flows in a constant and abundant service, even during the dry months of summer. The ancient Romans brought water from the hills for their baths and fountains in nine great aqueducts, the noble arches of which stretched for many miles across the Campagna—that is, the uncultivated plain which surrounds Rome. Three of the nine aqueducts still pour an abundance of pure water into the city.

Beautiful fountains and jets of water abound in the streets and piazzas of the Eternal City, and form one of its chief attractions. Two of these, forty-five feet in height, stand in the grand square

which fronts the Cathedral of St. Peter. A particularly fine one is the Pauline Fountain on the hill called Janiculum. But perhaps the most beautiful of all is the Trevi Fountain, about which I am going to speak.

The Trevi Fountain stands in a busy part of Rome. It is in the Strangers' Quarter, but also not far from the Palace of the Quirinal, where the King of Italy resides. It is one of the sights of the city which every tourist goes to see. The present structure is built as a front of marble to one of the old Roman palaces, and was completed in the year 1762. The water falls over broken artificial rocks, above which, in a central niche, stands the sea-god Neptune; while his sea-horses flounder beneath in the leaping, foaming waters. At the left side stands the figure of Health, and on the right side that of Fertility. There are four great pillars, on the top of which stand four maidens sculptured in marble; and in addition the face of a young maiden is sculptured here and there on various parts of the fountain. And in front of all is an immense stone basin, which is always full of water.

II

We may use the famous Trevi Fountain to illustrate the great Gospel promise now before us: "I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the water of life freely."

1. The Fountain may well remind us of *the Water of Life.* The Trevi water has been coming into Rome ever since the year 27 B.C. It was in the same year that Vipsanius Agrippa built the Pantheon; and he also brought the Trevi water, chiefly by an underground channel fourteen miles in length, to supply his baths at the back of that great temple. For more than nineteen centuries, therefore, this water has been flowing into Rome from its spring high up among the hills. At the Trevi Fountain we see the main stream of the aqueduct, but other noble fountains of the city are supplied from the same source. Indeed the fountain is called Trevi (from *tres* and *via*) because it has three great outlets.

Even so "there is a river, the streams whereof shall make glad the city of God." That is the river of the grace of God, the river of the gospel salvation. Its origin is "the throne of God and of the Lamb." It comes, indeed, out of the heart of God: "God so loved the world, that He gave His Only-begotten Son." The river of Water of Life is large, and broad, and deep, and always flows in full flood, because it comes from the eternal springs of the Divine love in Jesus Christ. This water brings to the soul, and also to the nation, both Health and Fertility. Jesus says, "The water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life." And this living water has three outlets, "The grace of

the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Ghost."

2. The Trevi Fountain may remind us of *its Freeness*. The water gushes out with great force, and the basin into which it is poured fills nearly the whole of the public square. The aqueduct yields daily at its three outlets thirteen million cubic feet of water. "It is interesting," says a recent writer, "to watch the people flocking to the Trevi Fountain. People from the country are there: they are thirsty, and turn aside to quench their thirst. Maidens from the city are there, carrying their pitchers, and bearing them away, when filled, on their heads. The cigar dealer from his shop stands side by side with an English lord. The fruit woman from her stall has as her next companion a grandly dressed duchess. Newspaper boys, travellers, young and old, rich and poor, are all at the fountain, and they have an equal right to it. It is free to all."

The same has to be said of the Water of Life. The supreme blessings of the soul — pardon and peace, purity of heart and eternal glory—are promised by Christ as an unbought gift, without money and without price. The Redeemer has paid the price of them all. He has bought them with His own blood. And therefore every believer can say, "Nothing in my hand I bring." For he knows it to be impossible that any of the promises

of the Gospel can fail. The glad invitation has for thousands of years run thus—

> "Ho! ye that thirst, approach the spring
> Where living waters flow:
> Free to that sacred fountain all
> Without a price may go."

3. The Trevi Fountain may remind us of the Living Water as regards *its Sweetness.* Perhaps no city in the world is so well supplied with good drinking water as Rome; and many are of opinion that the Trevi water is the best. The citizens of Rome are proud of this fountain, and those who drink of it once wish to taste it again. The Romans have a superstition to this effect, that if one who is leaving the Eternal City desires to revisit it, he should come to the Trevi Fountain on the evening before he departs, take a drink out of the basin of the fountain with his left hand, then turn and throw a coin into the water over his left shoulder. To do this, it is said, will ensure his coming back to Rome at some time or other. Perhaps there is this grain of truth in the Trevi superstitious practice, that the water of that fountain is so sweet that those who drink it want to come back to it again.

It is similar with the Water of Life. That never fails to satisfy the soul that is athirst. A single draught of it is enough to convince one that it has been rightly named. It quenches man's deepest thirst, and not for a time only, but for

ever. He who has drunk of it once forsakes all "streams of false delight." His changed taste brings him constantly back to the water which Jesus gives, and the gift becomes an ever-springing fountain within him. The Saviour said this great word to the woman at Jacob's Well, "Whosoever drinketh of this water shall thirst again: but whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life."

4. The Trevi Fountain suggests that *even a Little Girl may lead people to the Living Water.* I have said that the face of a young maiden looks out upon the spectator here and there from the fountain. This is in acknowledgment of the tradition that a shepherd girl one day pointed out the spring to the thirsty soldiers of Vipsanius Agrippa. In memory of the shepherdess, the fountain was long called *Aqua Virgo.* Indeed, it was only in the year 1453, when the main stream of the aqueduct was divided, that the fountain exchanged its ancient name for its present name, Trevi.

Now as Rome was in a sense indebted to a girl for its best drinking water, there are those who have been brought to Christ and His salvation by a young girl or a young boy. Many who are young in years have guided thirsty souls to the fountains of waters of life. Who does not know

about the "little maid" who had been "brought away captive out of the land of Israel," and about the great service that she did to her master Naaman? Her pity for him led to the cure of his leprosy, and to the bringing of blessing to his soul. In the providence of God little feet have sometimes guided to great discoveries, and youthful voices have given turning-points to history. God has also arranged for very many men and women that "a little child shall lead them" into the way of life.

XLII

The Pantheon in Rome

"And Hezekiah slept with his fathers, and they buried him in the chiefest of the sepulchres of the sons of David."—2 CHRON. xxxii. 33.

THESE words record the burial of a king—the great and good king Hezekiah. He deserved the honour of being laid to rest "in the chiefest of the sepulchres," because of his piety as a man and his eminence as a ruler.

In Christian countries the most honourable place of burial for a public man is one of the great cathedrals or other principal churches. The Duke of Wellington and Lord Nelson both lie in St. Paul's Cathedral in London. Many others of the great men of the nation sleep in Westminster Abbey. Some of the notable men of Italy have been buried in the Pantheon, one of the churches of Rome. I wish to say a few words about this last-mentioned church.

I

There are more than three hundred churches in the Eternal City, as Rome is sometimes called;

and of these the Pantheon is one of the most famous. It takes rank with St. Peter's, which is in many respects the noblest Christian temple in the world; with the Lateran Church, which gives the Pope his title of Bishop; and with St. Paul's Without the Walls, a church that is gorgeous with fine stones and mosaics, and medallions of the Popes from St. Peter down to Pius X.

The Pantheon is a wonderful building. It shows the massiveness, the daring, and the splendour of the old Roman architecture. It is round in shape, —built on a circular foundation; and it is surmounted by one of the largest domes in the world. The building is 140 feet in height, and also in diameter. There are no windows in it. It is lighted entirely by the opening, 28 feet in diameter, which has been left in the top of its magnificent dome. Through this open space stream both the sunshine and the rain. When I visited the Pantheon a shower happened to be falling, and the marble floor under the dome was wet.

The Pantheon in its original form was erected in 27 B.C., that is, nearly two thousand years ago. Its builder was Marcus Vipsanius Agrippa, the son-in-law of Augustus the first Roman Emperor. This is recorded on the frieze of the portico. But it was in the time of the Emperor Hadrian, 150 years afterwards, that it took its present form as a circular building, this being proved by the dates stamped on the bricks of which it is built.

At the time when the Pantheon was erected Rome was of course still a heathen city, and the edifice was built as a heathen temple. The name is from the Greek, and means "a place consecrated to all the gods." At first, and for some considerable time, this temple was dedicated to Jupiter, the chief deity of the Romans—the god whom they worshipped as the lord of heaven, and as the father of gods and men. By and by, however, it was consecrated to the worship of all the gods; and it actually did possess images of many of them, including Mars and Venus.

When the barbarians from the forests of Germany took possession of the Eternal City, the Pantheon was despoiled of its treasures, and began to fall into decay. But it was at length saved from ruin by Pope Boniface IV., who restored it, and transformed it into a Christian church. It is an interesting fact that the Pantheon is the only building of ancient Rome that has been perfectly preserved to this day. This is due to Pope Boniface, who had the heathen temple dedicated as a church in honour of the Virgin Mary and the Saints. Instead of still having to do with "all the gods," it now takes to do with "All Saints." Mount Olympus was regarded by the ancient Greeks as the chief abode of the gods, and the Pantheon became the Christian Olympus.

The great day of the year in this church is 1st November, which is All Saints' Day, or All

Hallows. For on this day of the year, in the Roman Catholic Church, the faithful are expected to remember the great mass of the saints in the calendar, and especially those who have no other day of the year set apart in their honour.

In the city of Naples, opposite the royal palace, there is a fine church called San Francesco, which is an imitation of the Pantheon at Rome, its dome being one of the boldest in Europe.

II

The Pantheon is the last resting-place of some of the most distinguished men of Italy.

That lovely land was at one time a home of the fine arts; and a number of the great artists lie in this church, the greatest of them being Raphael. Raphael was perhaps the most famous of all painters. He was buried in the Pantheon in the year 1520; his noble picture of the Transfiguration of our Lord, which he left behind him unfinished, being carried after his coffin in the funeral procession. It may even be said that Raphael died of this masterpiece of his. He passed away, too, in the prime of early manhood. His grave is in the third chapel on the left of the high altar; a chapel which he had himself endowed, and where his betrothed bride had been laid. Other painters, by their own desire, were buried near Raphael when their time came.

On the right of the altar lies King Victor

Emmanuel II., who was buried in 1878. He was the first sovereign of United Italy. It was during his reign, in the year 1870, that, through the statesmanship of Cavour and the valour of Garibaldi, Italy became one kingdom, from the Alps to Sicily.

The Pantheon contains another royal grave,—that of King Humbert, son of Victor Emmanuel II. This loved ruler of the Italian people—for they called him "Humbert the Good"—died at Monza in July 1900 by the wicked hand of an assassin; and was laid to rest, amid the lamentation of his subjects, opposite to his father on the left of the altar.

This famous Roman temple has seen many great days, both in pagan and Christian times. May the period soon come when it shall be purged of its popish images and superstitions, and when God and Christ shall be worshipped in it with a pure mind and a pure life!

XLIII

Jesus a Strong Man

"Himself took our infirmities, and bare our sicknesses."—MATT. viii. 17.

IT is sometimes very hot in Palestine, even during those months of the year when the land is visited by tourists from our own country. When I was in Nazareth one day, a year or two ago, in the end of February, the heat was so great that it was quite an exertion to move about in the streets, or to climb the high hill behind the town. Our party found it especially hot in the Jordan Valley, which is the most remarkable depression on the face of the earth, the Sea of Galilee being nearly 700 feet, and the Dead Sea nearly 1300 feet, below the level of the Mediterranean. At Tiberias in the blazing sunshine the atmosphere was like that of an oven, and one was comfortable only when sailing in an open boat upon the lake. At Jericho, too, early in March, the great heat was intolerable.

I

It was natural, in connection with all our experiences in the Holy Land, to remember our Lord, and to think of His public ministry in Galilee and in the South. For upwards of three years He went about doing good, and living a most laborious life, very largely in the open air. Indeed He must have been endowed with perfect health, to perform in that trying climate all the toilsome journeys, as well as all the evangelistic labours, of His public career.

But it was right that our Lord should be a strong man. Indeed it was quite necessary that He should. For He came into the world as "the Last Adam." And He had to be such a man as the first Adam was before the Fall. Did the boys and girls ever consider what kind of man the first man was, in soul and body, when he came from the hand of His Maker at the close of the sixth creative day? He was, as a piece of God's workmanship, and like everything else that God had made, quite faultless—"very good." His soul was pure from sin; and his body was free from all seeds of disease. Adam was made after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness; and he was also, in his body, a perfect human animal.

So it was also, and so it required to be, with the Man Christ Jesus, the Last Adam. He was

"fairer than the children of men." Not only was His soul perfectly holy; His body also was perfectly sound. "His life," as Dean Farrar has said, "was a life of health. Among its many sorrows and trials, sickness alone was absent We hear of His healing multitudes of the sick; we never hear that He was sick Himself."

The truth is, that no one who did not enjoy perfect health could have gone through the constant overwork, and could have endured the tremendous fatigue of the daily public life of Jesus of Nazareth, as that is described in the Gospels. He was constantly travelling about; chiefly in Galilee, but sometimes in Judea, and even also in Samaria and Perea. And He had to make His journeys always on foot, under the hot sun, and on the hard rough roads. For of course there were in those days no public conveyances—neither railway trains nor motor cars; and Jesus was too poor to have an ass of His own on which to ride. We read only once of His riding on an ass; He did this five days before He was crucified, and the animal was borrowed from a friend. Besides, the action was done not to save Him from the fatigue of walking; He did it in fulfilment of an Old Testament prediction, and as a symbol of His dignity as the Prince of Peace.

The public career of Jesus, therefore, was one of intense labour; and every new day brought

its own press of duties. He was always marching from one town to another, over the thirsty limestone ridges, often pressed by crowds, sometimes hungry, sometimes weary. He could say, "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have roosts; but the Son of Man hath not where to lay His head." He depended on the hospitality of friends for shelter and entertainment; for example, on that of Peter in Capernaum, and on that of Martha in Bethany. Often He must have slept all night in the open field, or under the shelter of some overhanging tree. And at every halting-place a sad crowd of sufferers from all kinds of diseases gathered about Him; and "there went virtue out of Him, and healed them all." O how strong He must have been! And yet often also, how utterly exhausted! We remember that once, as soon as He stepped on board the boat on the Lake of Galilee, He lay down in the stern and fell sound asleep. He slept so heavily that even the dreadful storm which came on did not awake Him.

Some one may put in the remark here that if Jesus was very strong in body, the twelve disciples must have been so also; for they kept company with Him during His public ministry, travelling with Him in the burning sunshine, and generally sharing His whole manner of life. And so, doubtless, they were. Even the holy women of whom Luke tells us,—Mary Magdalene, and the other Mary, and Joanna, and Susanna, and the rest,—

who also were His companions in travel, must have been in sound health and full of vigour; although it is probable that some of the women, if not all, would ride on mules or asses. All the same, the Master had a much more severe strain to endure than any of His followers. It was He, rather than they, who went about "preaching and showing the glad tidings of the kingdom of God." It was out of Him that virtue went in connection with the miracles of healing. And it was He alone who had the heavy burden in His heart of His coming sufferings and crucifixion. His strength, therefore, was really wonderful.

II

In January 1900, on a very hot day, the late Rev. Hugh Price Hughes, the eminent Wesleyan Methodist minister, was driving in a carriage and pair from Jericho up to Jerusalem. The atmosphere was extremely sultry; for in the Jordan Valley the heat is sometimes great, even in the month of January. At a turn of the road a Syrian, staff in hand, passed the carriage. Immediately Mr. Hughes said to himself: "There, that poor man, with flowing robe, and turbaned head, and sandalled feet, is dressed just as my Lord was dressed two thousand years ago. When He came up, as He did come up again and again, from Jericho to Jerusalem, He had to trudge through the heat on foot, as that poor fellow is

trudging. And here am I, professedly a disciple of His, riding up this hill in a carriage and pair. How dare I ride when my Lord walked?" And Mr. Hughes felt this so much that—like the enthusiastic, impulsive man that he was—he stopped the carriage, got down, and walked the rest of the way, in the broiling heat, up to Bethany. He felt that in these days Christians are tempted to be much too self-indulgent.

Nearly all the portraits of Christ drawn by the great painters give Him almost a feminine face, and make Him look not a particularly robust man. But therein the artists are wrong. He "bare our sicknesses"; but this means that He suffered in feeling with those whom He saw to be enduring either bodily pain or distress of mind. His loving sympathy led Him to make the sicknesses of others His own; but He was never sick Himself. The day on which He died upon the cross was a day of dreadful suffering; and the night preceding had been a sleepless one; for it was the night of the agony in Gethsemane, of the betrayal by Judas Iscariot, and of the trial before the High Priest. Yet when Jesus died, His bodily strength was by no means exhausted; for we read that, immediately before He yielded up His spirit, He "cried again with a loud voice." When He said, "It is finished," He had at last completed the work of taking our infirmities, and bearing our sicknesses.

XLIV

The Drunkard's Danger

"As he that lieth upon the top of a mast."—PROV. xxiii. 34.

I

IN the Bible, and especially in the Old Testament, there is very little said about ships, or about life on the sea. One writer, indeed, the Evangelist Luke, shows his love of the sea in the minute account which he gives in Acts xxvii. of the Apostle Paul's voyage to Rome, and of his shipwreck. It has been said that we learn more about ancient navigation from that one chapter than from all the classical books that have come down to us. But Luke was probably a Gentile, not a Jew. Certainly the Jew was not a sailor. He took little or no interest in navigation. In the land of Canaan there were no harbours, and no shipbuilding yards. The Bible writers refer to the Great Sea (that is, to the Mediterranean) as a man would do who knew and cared little about it, except that he had often seen it from the hills of Judea, and had sometimes wondered

what might be away on the horizon in the far west, where sky and sea seemed to meet.

But the man who wrote verse 34 of this chapter must have known something about ships and sea-life, or it would not have occurred to him to bring the mast-head into his ode, with which this chapter closes (vers. 29–35), on the sin and vice of drunkenness. He compares a tipsy man to one who has gone to sleep on the top of the sailyard—a spot where, of course, no one could lie without the greatest danger of falling off.

II

To climb up to the mast-head of a great ship requires both strong muscles and steady nerves. Very few men who are not sailors have ever done this. I know of a Presbyterian minister who has done it several times; and it is certainly something of a feat for a landsman to perform, even although the vessel may at the time be lying in port. But the gentleman to whom I refer says that he has never got on to the "truck"; that was too much for him to attempt.

Do the girls and boys know what the "truck" is? It is a small wooden cap, in shape somewhat like a button, on the very top of a mast or flag-staff. The "truck" seems small enough, when you look up to it from the deck of the ship; but in some cases it is as large as a fair-sized table. And

it is usually furnished with two or more pulleys, which are used to "reeve the halyards"—that is, to pass through the ropes for hoisting or lowering a sail or flag.

The mast-head is the last place in the world to lie down on, or to fall asleep on. Sometimes it happens that the captain of the ship requires to send a man up on to the "truck," even when the vessel is sailing in mid-ocean; but that is always to mend something that has become broken, or put something right that has gone wrong. And the seaman's duty is to do up there what he was sent aloft to do; and, having finished the job, to come down at once. However calm the sea may be, and however steady the ship, the mast-head is not a safe place to linger on, and only a fool would lie down upon the "truck." A sudden gust of wind might come along, and the vessel might give a lurch; with the result that the poor man might immediately be smashed down on the deck, or else (which is more likely) dashed into the sea and drowned.

III

The Wise Man, in this ode on the sin and folly of intemperance, compares the poor drunkard to one who lies down to sleep on the mast-head. That would be an infatuated thing to do; but the victim of strong drink does what is as bad—what indeed is far worse. His besetting sin creeps

in upon him more and more, and he may not be in the least aware what a firm hold it has upon him. All his friends, however, may see quite plainly that he is sinking and falling. His evil habit is injuring him in every way. He is gradually losing his business, his means, his health, his character. His most intimate friends, who really love and pity him, begin to remonstrate with him about the life he is living, and urge him to turn over a new leaf. One or two of them who are not total abstainers may offer to become such for his sake, that their example may help to strengthen him, should he promise to take strong drink no more; but, alas! it is in many cases of no avail.

The poor drunkard, being often unable to take care of himself, is exposed to many kinds of dangers; and yet all the while he may be unconscious of them. Scarcely any man will be found to admit, even to himself, that he has become a drunkard. Long after all his friends know about his habits, and shake their heads about him, and are beginning to despair of him, and to wonder in what kind of tragedy his life may be expected to end, the most that he himself will admit is that he has sometimes taken a little more than is good for him. He does not realise that he is like one that has lain down to sleep "upon the top of a mast."

It is sometimes said that it almost looks as if a tipsy man was watched over by a special providence in order to guard him from harm. He seems often-

times to escape many dangers which might involve him in destruction. It is indeed true that God is good, and forbearing, and long-suffering. But His care of the drunkard is not due to His thinking lightly of the sin of intemperance. His Word does not call this evil a "weakness," as some men do. Instead of that, Scripture says that drunkards shall not "inherit the kingdom of God."

Intemperance brings its own punishment even in this life. It poisons the body. It injures the mind. It degrades the moral nature. It paralyses the will. It kills the conscience. It labels the man for hell. And yet all the while he may not know this. He is like "one that lies upon the top of a mast."

And so the writer of these inspired Proverbs says to his son or his pupil, "My son, beware of strong drink. Look not thou upon the wine. It has cast down many strong men. Its end is, that it bites like a serpent and stings like a basilisk." In this word to the young people I am trying to tofollow the Wise Man's example. It is safer for oneself not to "look" upon the wine-cup, and it is also kinder to others. It depends, too, upon the girls and boys of to-day whether our beloved land shall be a less drunken country in the twentieth century than, sad to say, it was in the nineteenth.

XLV

Finding One's Life

"Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."—MARK viii. 35.

I

BOTH before Christ came into the world, and since His coming, brave and good men have been found willing to sacrifice their own lives for the benefit of their fellow-men, and of their country. There are some beautiful illustrations of this in Roman history.

That is a fine legend of Horatius Cocles, one of the heroes of the old Roman lays. In the year 507 B.C., along with Titus Herminius and Spurius Lartius, he defended the Sublician bridge over the Tiber at Rome against Lars Porsena and the whole Etruscan army. While "the dauntless three" were keeping back the enemy, the Romans behind them were hewing down the bridge. When the timbers began to crack, and the loosened beams were almost ready to fall, Horatius sent back his two companions, but remained himself, withstanding alone the attacks

of the enemy, until the destruction of the bridge was complete, and Rome was saved. He then prayed to "Father Tiber" to take his life in charge, and at once plunged into the stream and swam across to the city in safety. His fellow-citizens received him with shouts of joyful triumph, and heaped rewards and honours upon him. Horatius Cocles was held in everlasting remembrance by the Romans for thus showing his willingness to "lose his life," if only he could save his country; and almost all the old Latin writers tell us

> "How well Horatius kept the bridge
> In the brave days of old."

Another beautiful Roman legend occurs to me. It happened one day, in the year 362 B.C., that the earth in the Forum—that is, the market-place in Rome—suddenly opened, and formed a yawning gulf. According to one account the chasm was formed by a thunderbolt. All attempts to fill it up failed; and when at length the soothsayers were consulted about the matter, they declared that the gap would not close until what was dearest to Rome as its most precious treasure, and that on which its greatness was based, should be cast into it. Were that done, however, the soothsayers said that the State would continue to prosper. While others were hesitating, and wondering what this announcement meant, a noble youth called Marcus Curtius stepped forward. He

declared that Rome possessed no more valuable treasure than a brave citizen in arms, and offered himself there and then as the victim that was demanded. Then, having mounted his horse in full armour, he leaped into the chasm, which forthwith closed over his head. This legend of the self-sacrifice of Curtius reminded every Roman how sweet and how honourable it was to a good man to die for his country.

II

But it is still nobler and sweeter to lose one's life "for Christ's sake and the gospel's." Many have done that during these nineteen hundred years. The martyrs of the Christian Church were not men and women who were determined to "save their lives" whatever might happen. What Satan said with a sneer about the afflicted patriarch Job was not true of them—"All that a man hath will he give for his life." Instead of that, "they loved not their lives unto the death." Rather than be unfaithful to Christ, they without any hesitation sacrificed their earthly lives that they might lay hold on the life which is life indeed.

Let me refer to only two cases of brave Christian men who deliberately arranged to risk, and indeed to lose, their lives "for Christ's sake and the gospel's."

The one is that of Telemachus. I do not refer,

of course, to old Homer's hero of that name, the son of Ulysses and Penelope, of whom we read in the *Odyssey*; but to Telemachus, an Asiatic monk, who was born in the fourth century of the Christian era.

In his distant home in the East that good man learned about the cruel gladiatorial combats which took place in the great Colosseum at Rome. He knew that although Rome was now a Christian city, under the government of a Christian Emperor, this brutal heathen pastime was still followed. At the sound of the trumpet throngs of wretched men closed in deadly strife, and combats of gladiators with wild beasts also took place. Telemachus felt that these practices were wrong and cruel, and must grieve the heart of the Lord Jesus Christ, who had come into the world not to destroy men's lives, but to save them.

The good monk thought a great deal about the combats in the Colosseum, and prayed to God on the subject, and at last resolved to go to Rome to do what he could to put an end to such a wicked pastime. So he bade farewell to the convent, walked all the way to the seashore, found a ship bound for Italy, and took his passage in her. By and by he reached Rome, and learned that on the very next day after his arrival the gladiators were to fight for their lives in the amphitheatre.

Telemachus took care to be present. He got a seat not far from the barrier which separated

the arena from the crowded tiers of spectators. In due time the gladiators came in, sword in hand; and, as the signal was about to be given to begin the combat, the brave monk leaped over the barrier into the arena, and cried, "Forbear! forbear! for the sake of the dear Lord who died for men—forbear!" There was a deep stillness for one moment; but this was broken in the next moment by a frenzied roar from ten thousand throats, "Down with the mad monk! down with him!" The vast multitude were angry at the thought of the sports not going on. Then came a fierce shower of stones. The Romans stoned Telemachus, as the people of Jerusalem had stoned Stephen. In a few minutes he was dead, and the cruel games proceeded as if nothing had happened.

Next day, however, many who had been present said that the monk from Asia was right. The madness of the people subsided. They began to see that the gladiatorial combats were sinful and inhuman. Soon the Emperor Honorius made an edict which abolished them; and he also proclaimed Telemachus a martyr. The time came, too, when that good and brave man was enrolled among the saints. So the stranger monk did not lay down his life in vain. Gibbon has said truly, in the *Decline and Fall*, that "his death was more useful to mankind than his life." Then, too, he himself found, as we trust, eternal blessedness.

III

But I said that I would mention another example of a brave Christian who arranged to risk and lose his life for Christ's sake. I shall take the case of the life and death of the Belgian priest, Father Damien.

Molokai, one of the Hawaiian or Sandwich Islands in the Pacific Ocean, is the place to which the Hawaiian Government sends those of the islanders who are afflicted with the awful disease of leprosy. Having been sent as a missionary to Honolulu, the capital of the Islands, in 1864, Father Damien learned from the bishop the miserable condition of the lepers, of whom there were upwards of seven hundred. He also saw many painful scenes which attended the departure of the plague-stricken from Honolulu. After a time he conceived an earnest desire to be of service to both their souls and their bodies. He resolved to live and die as the companion and friend of the poor sufferers at Molokai.

Damien went there in 1873, and remained for the rest of his life, although he made occasional short visits to Honolulu. When he took up residence in the leper settlement he was the only healthy person in the community. There was no medical man or other official among them. The place was squalid and hideous. There was a good deal of drinking and debauchery. But

the influence of the good priest soon wrought a great change. He not only attended to the spiritual needs of the poor creatures; for years he was their magistrate, teacher, carpenter, gardener, cook, and so forth. He also contrived, by appeals to the Government and by the labour of his own hands, to improve the houses of the lepers, and their supply of food and water. In the course of his pathetic ministry Father Damien comforted the dying hours of about two thousand sufferers.

For twelve years this devoted man escaped the loathsome disease; but at last, in 1885, he was stricken. He continued his self-denying labours until near the end, which took place in 1889. Then Damien found his true life. And, as has been said, "When the millionaires, and statesmen, and warriors of the nineteenth century are all forgotten, the leper-priest of Molokai will still be lovingly remembered on earth and in heaven."

The noble self-sacrifice of the monk Telemachus and of the priest Damien are only a faint reflection of that of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Saviour. The Redeemer made an infinitely greater sacrifice than either when He undertook our cause, and came to our world to save us from our sins. His Cross is the very highest example of self-forgetfulness for the good of others. He died for us, but He now lives again in the power of an

endless life. "He shall see of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." And He expects all of us who have received the gift of eternal life from Him to do our utmost to save others from death. He says, "Whosoever shall lose his life for My sake and the gospel's, the same shall save it."

XLVI

The More Glorious Temple

"The glory of this latter house shall be greater than of the former, saith the LORD of hosts."—HAG. ii. 9.

I

THE "house" mentioned is the Temple of God at Jerusalem; and the "former" house was the first Temple, which was built by King Solomon, the son and successor of David. That Temple had stood for 424 years, and had been broken down and destroyed by Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, when he captured Jerusalem, and carried the Jews away into exile.

At the close of the Captivity many of the people came back from Babylon to Jerusalem, and set to work to rebuild the House of the Lord. Their labours were directed by Zerubbabel the governor, and Joshua the high priest. And God raised up among them this Prophet Haggai, to encourage them to proceed with the work notwithstanding all difficulties and interruptions; and to reveal to them also the future glory of the Temple which they had begun to build. He assured them

that "this latter house" would by and by become the scene of far more illustrious events than the Temple of Solomon had ever witnessed.

It was difficult for the Jews to believe this. For the first Temple had been a magnificent building, one of the grandest in the world. King David was divinely instructed regarding the design and plan of the house. It took between seven and eight years to complete it in all its beauty of stone and timber, and of silver and gold; upwards of 180,000 Hebrews and Canaanites being employed in the work. The Holy Place and the Most Holy Place were all overlaid within with gold, so that there was nothing for the eye to rest upon but gold, except the blue veil which divided the two chambers. The Temple furniture, too, was of gold and silver —most of it being either gold or gold-plated.

Within the Most Holy Place stood the ark of the covenant, which had been made when Israel was at Mount Sinai. This was a small chest of acacia wood, covered with plates of gold. On the top of it was the mercy-seat, a slab of solid gold; on each end of which was placed a golden image, representing a cherub facing inwards and bending down over the ark. Within the ark were the two tablets of stone on which God had written with His finger the words of the Ten Commandments; these tablets being the evidence of the covenant between the Lord and the people. The throne of God was on the ark; and upon the mercy-seat

above rested the cloud of fire which was the mysterious symbol of the Divine presence. That supernatural light, enshrined between the two cherubim, was called the "glory."

Taken altogether, Solomon's Temple was wonderful. It realised indeed what his father David said it should be: it was "exceeding magnifical, of fame and of glory throughout all countries."

How, then, was it possible that the small and feeble colony of Jewish patriots who came back from Babylon could succeed in building a Temple that would be more glorious? It was not to be thought for a moment that they could eclipse the achievement of Solomon by erecting a more splendid palace than he had done. We remember that when the foundation of the second Temple was laid, the younger people who were present shouted with a great shout of joy; but the very old men, who could remember the first Temple and its glories, "wept with a loud voice" because of the sad contrast in every way between the new structure and that of Solomon.

It is true that after the passing of nearly five hundred years the Temple of Zerubbabel was not only completely repaired, but also greatly enlarged and adorned by Herod the Great. But Herod did not, and could not, make it as rich as Solomon's had been. He only made it twice the size of the first Temple.

II

In what respects, then, was the Temple that was built after the Captivity to have greater glory than the first Temple? I shall name three.

1. *Christ, the Redeemer, was to come to it.* The house built by Zerubbabel and Herod was inferior in many respects to that of Solomon. It had within it no sacred ark, no tables of the covenant, no blood-besprinkled mercy-seat, no supernatural "glory" between the cherubim, no heaven-kindled fire on the altar, and no oracle which made known the Divine will. It wanted also the pot of manna, and the rod of Aaron, and the golden shields. But the second Temple had what made up unspeakably well for the want of these. It received many visits from the Lord Jesus Christ, when He lived as a Man in the world. His blessed feet often trod its courts. He made His first visit to His Father's house when He was twelve years of age. And during His public ministry, whenever He was in Jerusalem, He "sat daily teaching in the Temple." "The blind and the lame came to Him in the Temple, and He healed them." He said of Himself one day, "In this place is One greater than the Temple."

As the first Temple was upon occasions filled with the glory-cloud which was the token of the Divine presence, the second was sometimes filled in like manner with the glory of God veiled in

the human nature of Jesus Christ. And this made Zerubbabel's Temple far more glorious than Solomon's.

2. *Christ, the Redeemer, was to "give peace" in it.* In the end of the verse the Prophet Haggai tells us this. Jehovah would grant rest to His people from their enemies in the city of Jerusalem, the place where the Temple stood. The first Temple was built by the king whose name means "the Peaceable"; but the second is made far more glorious by the work of the true Peace-bringer.

In the outer court of the Temple, directly in front of the principal entrance, stood the great brazen altar—the altar of burnt offering. But none of the beasts that were being continually sacrificed on it could take away the guilt of sin, or bring relief to the troubled conscience. It is the Lord Jesus Christ who is "our Peace." He has "made peace by the blood of His cross"; and His crucifixion took place at Jerusalem not far from the Temple. The second Temple saw Him restore peace between God and man, and arrange matters for peace in the future between man and man.

3. *Christ was to put a still better Temple in its place.* That nobler Temple is the New Testament Church of which Christ is the Head. Its foundation was laid in the hour when Jesus died on Golgotha, when the veil of Herod's Temple was torn in two from the top to the bottom. Its walls

began to be built on the Day of Pentecost, and they have been a-building ever since. They consist of the mass of redeemed souls; and each true Christian is a stone in this spiritual house. The nations of the world, too, shall bring into it everything that they count precious, in order to beautify it (ver. 7, R.V.).

"And it shall come to pass in the last days, that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it."

XLVII

Phylacteries

"They make broad their phylacteries, and enlarge the borders of their garments."—MATT. xxiii. 5.

I

WHAT were these "phylacteries" to which the scribes and the Pharisees attached such importance? They were slips of parchment that were worn by the stricter Jews during public worship in our Lord's time; and indeed they are worn in the synagogues still. Certain passages of Scripture, taken from the Books of Moses, were written upon the slips; and these were put into two small cubical cases of tough leather, which were worn, the one upon the forehead between the eyes, and the other upon the left arm. Every male Israelite above the age of thirteen years was expected to wear the text-boxes, at least at morning prayer. The practice began to be observed probably about two hundred years before the coming of Christ. It is certain that there was no wearing of phylacteries earlier than the return from the seventy years' Exile in Babylon.

The head-phylactery was called a "frontlet." It was composed of four pieces of parchment or vellum, on each of which was written, in the original Hebrew, a passage from the Law. Two of the passages were from Exodus, and the other two from Deuteronomy. These passages were the warrant which the Jews thought they had for wearing phylacteries; for in all of them "signs upon the hand" and "frontlets" are mentioned. (The four passages are, Ex. xiii. 2–10, and 11–16; Deut. vi. 4–9, and xi. 13–22.) The box containing the four texts was fastened by a loop to thin leather straps, which were twisted round the head, the box resting on the brow.

For the hand-phylactery a single piece of parchment was used, and the same four passages were written on it in four parallel columns. In this case the square text-box was placed at the bend of the bare left arm, on its inner side, just above the elbow, so that when the arm was bent, the phylactery might rest "upon the heart" (Deut. xi. 18); and the straps attached to the box were wound about the arm both above and below the elbow in a spiral line, which ended at the top of the middle finger.

But our Lord, in speaking of the scribes and the Pharisees, makes mention also of "the borders of their garments." The part of the dress referred to in these words is the cloak, the Jew's outer or upper garment. This was a square or oblong

strip of cloth, two or three yards long, and perhaps two yards wide. It was somewhat like a Highlander's plaid; and it might be either wrapped round the body, or thrown over the shoulder. A garment of this kind is appropriate in the East, where the temperature is so unequal, with so many sudden variations from heat to cold. It also served the poor man for his bed-clothing.

By the law of Moses (Num. xv. 37–41), the Hebrews were required to wear fringes or tassels upon the four corners of this upper garment; and upon the tassel at each corner they were to put a ribband or cord of blue, the colour symbolical of heaven. This was to remind the Jew of heaven, and of the God of heaven, the God of the covenant, whose livery he thus wore. The tassel and the blue ribband were a kind of national uniform.

Now our Lord, as part of His great denunciation in this chapter, blames the scribes and Pharisees of His day, not for wearing text-cases on their foreheads and under their left arms, but for making these unusually broad and conspicuous. He could not blame them for wearing the tassels with their cord of blue; for that uniform, as we have seen, was prescribed by Moses, and He always wore it Himself. It was the hem or tassel of His garment which the diseased woman in the crowd at Capernaum touched, when she wanted to steal a cure from Him as He went on His way.

But Jesus does blame the scribes and Pharisees

for making their text-boxes, or the straps attached to them, very broad, and for increasing the size of their fringes. He blames them, too, for wearing the phylacteries not only during the act of prayer in the synagogue, but also as they walked to and fro in the streets, where they stood praying that men might admire them. They did all this, as much as to say to all who noticed them, "See how very holy people we are!" It was the opinion of some of the Jewish Rabbis that the precept about the fringes and the phylacteries was the greatest commandment of the 613 which they had counted up as contained in the Law of Moses; and that the man who carefully observed that precept is to be looked upon as if he had kept the whole Law!

The Lord Jesus hated a showy, empty, merely outward profession of piety, and whatever in connection with the worship of God was done "to be seen of men." And therefore He censured the Pharisees for making such a fuss about their fringes and their little text-boxes.

II

The Law of Moses did not really enjoin the wearing of phylacteries or frontlets. In the four places where the subject is spoken of, the writer is only using figures of speech. He did not mean that it was the duty of the Israelites to tattoo or brand their hands and foreheads, or to hang up texts upon them. And for more than a thousand

years the people quite understood this. The Law, however, as we have seen, did prescribe the wearing of the cord or thread of blue upon the fringes of the outer robe; but that precept was binding only upon the Jews in Old Testament days—it is not for us who live in the gospel age.

Nowadays it is for Christian men and women themselves to decide whether or not they ought to wear badges on their clothes, in order to mark anything about their religion, or in connection with their moral conduct. Our Master, when He was in the world, did not make choice of a badge, and recommend His apostles and disciples to attach it to their outer garments. He commands us to be careful to do His will, and to let the light of our good works shine. Men will recognise us to be His people, He says, by our tempers and our deeds. "By this shall all men know that ye are My disciples, if ye have love one to another."

Yet religious badges have often been worn by Christian people. The Crusaders, who went in the Middle Ages to recover Jerusalem and the Holy Sepulchre from the Saracens, wore a red cross upon the shoulder; and because of this their enterprise was so named, for the word "Crusade" means War of the Cross. Pope Urban II. had said to the multitude at Clermont, "You are soldiers of the cross; wear then on your breasts or on your shoulders the blood-red sign of Him who died for the salvation of your souls."

In our time the army ambulance wagons for the conveyance of sick and wounded soldiers have a red cross painted on them, and the regimental stretcher-bearers wear red cross armlets. It is the same with the ambulance associations in civil life. In like manner the badge worn by members of social purity societies is a white cross. The Queen Victoria Jubilee nurses wear a blue band round the left arm, with the badge of the Institute upon it. Some total abstainers wear a blue ribbon in the button-hole, or sewed to the edge of the coat; and members of the British Women's Temperance Association use a tiny brooch in the form of a bow or knot of white enamel. "General" Booth has put the letters S.A. on the tunics of the officers of the Salvation Army. The badge of the Christian Endeavour Society is a silver monogram of the letters C.E., worn as a scarf-pin or a brooch. That is used as the sign of a definite Christian experience, and as the symbol of membership in a world-wide society.

In the light of all this, then, what are we to say about the system of wearing religious badges? We can only repeat what we have said already, that the Lord Jesus Christ has never either enjoined or forbidden the wearing of them. Also, this is a free country in which we live, and every one must choose for himself whether to make use of badges or not.

To some natures the badge has its advantages.

There are those whom it may help to commit to the right path before their fellows, and whom it may strengthen to resist temptation. A recent writer has said: "A young Christian Endeavourer who went up to London was dazzled by its sights and enervated in will by its lovely temptations. He entered a crowded tea-room. As he took his seat a C.E. monogram shone out in the scarf of one who sat opposite. His heart leaped up; his dark thoughts fled. He leaned over, and in a whisper confessed himself also an Endeavourer. A warm hand-clasp, a cordial greeting, and the two young men entered into a friendship of enriching blessing. Many an older man has been strengthened as he has seen, in a passing glance, the badge shining in the lapel of a young Endeavourer."

But there are other natures to which the wearing of a badge brings moral danger, even the same peril as the broad phylactery of the Pharisee. The badge is not to be commended if the wearing of it tends to make one priggish, or tempts one to put on airs of superior piety. The temptation to think ourselves much better than other men—more conscientious, more faithful, more holy—lurks in many hearts. But spiritual pride is very offensive to God, and it is also ruinous to the soul. The disciple of Christ is to let his light shine before men, but not with the view of securing their admiration. Such a mean motive as "to be seen of

men" is a little speck which may taint the whole character until it becomes quite impure.

May the Holy Spirit of God make us, and keep us, deeply in earnest in our religious life, and at the same time very humble, whether we wear any kind of badge or not!

XLVIII

"By Little and Little"

"By little and little I will drive them out from before thee, until thou be increased, and inherit the land."—Ex. xxiii. 30.

I

ALL of us, and especially the young people, are apt to overlook the importance of little things. Yet great things are made up of little things, and great works are accomplished "by little and little."

We ought not to "despise the day of small things," first of all because, as I have said, great things are made up of little things. A brick is a little thing; and yet a great house is built of a multitude of bricks. The deepest snow-fall that we have seen mantling the earth on a winter morning came down from the clouds in single flakes. Drop added to drop makes the great ocean. The lofty mountain is composed of grains of earth. The white chalk cliffs in the South of England—Beachy Head, for example—are largely made up of the shells of very small insects; and many of the Alps and Himalayas are formed of

limestone, which is full of the remains of shells, and corals, and sea-lilies. A man's life, too, is made up of one little moment after another.

And we ought not to "despise the day of small things" for this other reason, that great works are accomplished "by little and little." The greatest labour becomes easy if it is divided into small parts. Nobody can jump over a mountain, but step after step takes one to the other side of it. The coral reef, which extends it may be for hundreds of miles, is slowly built up by millions upon millions of very small creatures working under the sea. The Pyramids of Egypt were set up, one single stone at a time. The finest paintings and sculptures have been done stroke by stroke. The morning newspaper may require for its production hundreds of thousands of separate types; but these have been put together letter by letter. And all the learning of the greatest scholar is but the result of one lesson added to another.

In the verse which I have quoted above from the Book of Exodus the Lord told the Israelites, when they were encamped at Mount Sinai, that He was going to give them possession of the land of Canaan in the same manner—"by little and little." The wicked heathen tribes — Hivites, Canaanites, and Hittites — were not all to be driven out straight away. Such an arrangement would not have been good for Israel. The land

would have in part "become desolate"; for there would not have been enough of people to keep down the weeds and brushwood, and to cultivate the farms. Also the wild beasts would have multiplied, and so much as to become a danger to the new occupants of the land. We know that when the Ten Tribes, long centuries afterwards, were carried away into Assyria, lions multiplied in North Palestine, and these destroyed some of the people who had newly settled there. Similarly, after the Franco-German War of 1870–71, it was found that in many of the districts that had been stripped bare, wolves increased, and gave trouble to the remaining inhabitants. It was, therefore, a kind and considerate arrangement that the Israelites should take possession of the land of promise "by little and little."

II

This also is the way in which the boys and girls must both do their work and gain their victories.

At school reading is learned step by step,—first the very smallest and easiest words, and then the words of more than one syllable. So is it with writing: first strokes, next pot-hooks, then the letters; afterwards text, half-text, and small hand, in order. And so too with arithmetic: first addition, then subtraction, after that multiplication, and so on.

But does any one ask, "What battles have young people to fight?" The answer is that every one of us has to contend against sin, and that the chief battlefield is within our own hearts. What a lot of different kinds of sins God wants us to subdue! Some of these sins are very big; others are not so large-looking; but all of them are both displeasing to God and injurious to ourselves. To name only a few, there are dishonour of parents, forgetfulness of God, selfishness, bad temper, malice, untruthfulness, laziness. But of course no boy or girl can subdue these black sins by fighting against the whole of them at once. It is wise to deal, in a very earnest way, with one or two at a time. Battle with one enemy till you have conquered it, and then attack another.

> "Each victory will help you some other to win;
> Fight manfully onward; dark passions subdue;
> Look ever to Jesus, He will carry you through."

It is by fighting sin and practising what is right that character is formed. But Rome was not built in a day; and the house which the wise man builds upon the rock, by doing Christ's will, is raised up "by little and little." A good character is produced, as an icicle of pure water is, one drop at a time. It is built up by a countless number of small acts of obedience, industry, carefulness, kindness, good manners, and other virtues.

One other thought before I stop. The Old Testament Church was to conquer the land of

Canaan "by little and little"; and the New Testament Church is to conquer the world for Christ in the same way. In no other way is complete victory possible. In the first century the Apostle Paul, during his marvellous twenty years of missionary travel, planted churches in Asia Minor, Macedonia, and Greece; and from these the gospel light has moved westward, and has flooded both Europe and North America. During the nineteenth century the Christian Church planted mission stations in India, China, Africa, and the South Sea Islands; and from these, in due time, the light shall spread over the whole of the great continents. The work can only be done "by little and little." This is God's appointed method of driving out evil and of building up good. The Church's motto, therefore, must be, *Festina lente*; that is, "Hasten slowly"—slow but sure. I must combat my own sins in detail, and become step by step purer and more humble. And the Church of Christ must win the world in the same way, conquering one country after another, until it has "built Jerusalem" in all lands.

XLIX

The Crown of Thorns

"And when they had platted a crown of thorns, they put it upon His head."—MATT. xxvii. 29.

IT was very sad, was it not? that the gentle Jesus should be treated so. He had done nothing amiss. On the contrary, He had gone about doing good. It had been the great aim of His life to do God's will, and this aim He had fulfilled perfectly. He did not please Himself; His whole life was a long sacrifice for the good of others. But, while his entire nature was gentleness and peace, there was a wonderful blending in Him of humility and authority. Hence His words to Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, when He stood before him on the morning of the day of the crucifixion, "Thou sayest that I am a King."

Pilate's soldiers could not understand this; and so, as soon as Jesus was condemned to be crucified, they began to make a fool of Him, because He had claimed royal honours. They caused Him to sit down in a broken chair; they covered Him with some soldier's cast-off cloak; they made a wreath

or garland of thorns, and bound it round His brow; they put a reed in His hand for a sceptre; and then they bowed themselves to the ground before Him in mock reverence. It is to be noticed that the thorns were not put upon the head of Jesus to torture Him; rather—

> "Sinners in derision crowned Him,
> Mocking thus the Saviour's claim."

We are not certain what kind of thorns the soldiers used; probably they were the twigs of a thorny bush, which grows in plenty about Jerusalem. There is, however, much good gospel teaching suggested by the crowning with thorns. I shall mention three main thoughts in connection with it.

I

JESUS BECAME KING THROUGH SORROW.

There are quite a number of different ways in which men may reach a throne. In many cases the crown is an inheritance: it comes by right of *birth.* That is the way in our own country. King Edward wears the crown of the United Kingdom because he is the eldest son of Queen Victoria, his predecessor on the throne. Sometimes a crown is *won* with the sword. Not once or twice in the history of the world have men waded through seas of slaughter to a throne. William of Normandy did so when he became King of England in the year 1066. Sometimes a man is made king by

express *Divine appointment.* It was so in the case of Saul, the son of Kish; and in the case of David, the son of Jesse. And at other times the people themselves *choose* their ruler. The English people in one generation chose Oliver Cromwell, and in another William of Orange.

But Jesus is King not in one, but in all, of these four ways. By birth, first of all; for he is the Son of the Highest, and therefore His throne is His birthright. By the sword also; for He won His crown by conquering sin and Satan. By Divine appointment; for God the Father had said, "Yet have I set My King upon My holy hill of Zion"; and Jesus is the Messiah, that is, the Anointed of the Lord. By the choice of His people too; for they crown Him King with all the love and devotion of their hearts.

And the Redeemer has also become our Mediatorial Sovereign through *sorrow.* The crown of thorns reminds us not only that Jesus is the King of Martyrs, and that there is no sorrow like unto His sorrow; it reminds us also that His sufferings were the necessary pathway to His glory. With Jesus, as with His people, it was, "No cross, no crown." The Captain of our salvation had to be made "perfect through sufferings." We remember His own words to the two disciples with whom He conversed on the way to Emmaus, "Behoved it not the Christ to suffer these things, and to enter into His glory?"

II

THE SORROW OF JESUS WAS CAUSED BY OUR SIN.

The Saviour was holy, but He came into a world of sin, and lived in the closest contact with sinners. Jesus among men was "as a lily among thorns." How the mass of sin which He saw everywhere around Him must have vexed His pure and spotless soul! Sin is that abominable thing which He hates: it is so hateful that He "cannot look" upon it. There is about sinners nothing to attract, but everything to repel, the affection of a holy Saviour.

Jesus was loving, and He came into a world full of all kinds of hate. He found men hating God, and hating one another. He was Himself gentle as a woman, and also innocent and tender as a child. But the world hated Him, and persecuted Him, and by and by refused to allow Him to live any longer. He "was led as a sheep to the slaughter"; and the only crown which the world gave Him was a crown of thorns.

But Jesus came into the world for the very purpose of bearing the sin of the world. His sorrow was due to our wickedness; because of His own set purpose He came to bear our griefs, and carry our sorrows. Thorns and thistles are an emblem of the misery that has been brought into the world by sin. They came after sin came.

They formed a part of the curse which God pronounced upon Adam after he ate the forbidden fruit. So the crown of thorns was the wreath which our guilt and sin wove for the royal brow of the Redeemer.

When Abraham had bound Isaac his son upon the altar, and the knife was in his hand which he had lifted up to slay him, God called to him out of heaven to spare the lad; for he had already as good as done the deed, and the proof of his faith and obedience was complete. Abraham found a ram in a thicket near by, which he offered up as a burnt offering instead of Isaac. That ram is a type of Jesus Christ, our Sacrifice. The thorns caught Him,—a willing Captive, that He might bleed and die in our room. God "hath made Him to be sin for us, who knew no sin."

III

The Sorrow of Jesus gave Him Kingly Power to put away our Sorrows.

I have said that every sorrow is the result of sin, and that the sorrows of our life are like thorns. It was the first Adam that brought them in; and the Lord Jesus Christ is called "the Last Adam" because He came to the world to take them away. In His obedience unto death on behalf of His people He caught up the thorns from which they suffer,—all their troubles and afflictions and difficulties,—and bound them round His own

brow. He thus made the sufferings and trials of His people His own, and in all their affliction He was afflicted. The wearing of the crown of thorns, therefore, was more than a part of our Lord's humiliation: Christian faith sees that it was also a triumphal crown. It was a wreath of victory over the thorns.

Sin itself may be described as a thorn. Every evil deed that we have done is a pricking brier and a grieving thorn. But Jesus our Saviour will put that away. "He was manifested to take away our sins," and He has done this "by the sacrifice of Himself." *Pain* is a thorn: He will put away that too. Many a good Christian has, like the Apostle Paul, "a thorn in the flesh," which hinders his happy freedom of movement in his Master's service; but the Lord Jesus will in the meantime give him strength to bear it, and afterwards take it away from him for ever. *Death* is a thorn; but the Saviour shall put away that also. Already He has removed its sting. "The last enemy that shall be destroyed is death." "There shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

Sometimes in the very centre of a thorny hedge is to be found the nest of a gentle little bird. The bird was wise to place her cradle here, for the thorns may be a protection to her and it; they may be a shelter from harm to herself and her

young ones. Even thus is it also with the mass of thorns which the Lord Jesus, when He was in the world, gathered about Himself. They are a safe place for us to take shelter in. Every believer can say with Christian, in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, "He hath given me rest by His sorrow, and life by His death."

L

Hoist with his own Petard

"He made a pit, and digged it, and is fallen into the ditch which he made. His mischief shall return upon his own head, and his violent dealing shall come down upon his own pate."—Ps. vii. 15, 16.

I

THE natives of Australia have a wonderful missile—that is, a weapon thrown with the hand—which they use sometimes in war, but more usually in hunting. It is called the "boomerang." This curious instrument is made of hard wood, and is shaped like the segment of a circle. It is about two feet long, and of the form of a reaping-hook; and it is so balanced that when thrown to a distance it returns towards the thrower. Instead of going directly forward and there falling to the earth, the boomerang slowly ascends in the air, whirling round and round with a quick motion, till it reaches a considerable height, when it begins to move back, and finally falls to the ground behind the thrower. Sometimes, unfortunately, it may fall too near him; it may strike him and severely injure him.

Now the words of the Psalm, quoted above, warn us that sin is like a boomerang which misses the mark, and returns to injure the person who has thrown it. The wicked man often falls into the pit which he digged for his neighbour. He finds himself caught, like a hunter, in the trap which he laid for his prey. He is like the engineer, of whom Hamlet speaks in the great tragedy, that is "hoist with his own petard"—that is, with the mortar with which he had attempted to blow up his enemy's gate.

It is a natural law that all kinds of sin return upon the sinner, and become their own punishment. The slave of bodily pleasures brings bodily disease upon himself. And in every case, "whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."

But it often seems especially true of sins against one's neighbour that they "return upon one's own head," like badly thrown boomerangs. Among barbarous and half-civilised peoples it has sometimes been ordained that the criminal is to receive as a punishment exactly what he did in his wickedness to another man. The Hebrew law given at Mount Sinai said: "He that killeth any man shall surely be put to death. . . . And if a man cause a blemish in his neighbour, as he hath done, so shall it be done to him; breach for breach, eye for eye, tooth for tooth." There is a rude justice in this which has in it something

that is soothing to the feelings, and satisfying to the conscience, of uncivilised nations. It is called the *lex talionis*, that is, the law of retaliation.

II

History and tradition and legend contain many dramatic illustrations of the operation of this principle, under the wonder-working providence of God.

Here are one or two, first of all, from the Bible.

We read in the Book of Judges that Adonibezek (that is, the lord or king of Bezek) was treated by the Israelites with barbarous cruelty when they took him prisoner as they were conquering the land of Canaan. To unfit him for handling sword or spear any more, they cut off his thumbs; and to disable him from running away, they cut off his great toes. But Adonibezek regarded this maiming as the just judgment of God upon himself for his own cruelty in the past; for he had treated no fewer than seventy petty Canaanite kings exactly in the same way.

At the time the Amalekites were destroyed during the reign of Saul it fell to the saintly Samuel to "hew in pieces" Agag their king. Agag had been a leader of these land-pirates; he had spent his life in plundering and murdering; and therefore the prophet said, when he told him that he must die, "As thy sword hath made women

childless, so shall thy mother be childless among women."

Haman, another Amalekite, and the Jews' enemy, as every intelligent Sabbath-school boy and girl knows, was hanged on the very gibbet which he had caused to be prepared for the execution of Mordecai.

The accusers of Daniel, who had plotted to ruin and murder him out of fear that he might be promoted over their heads, were themselves cast into the den of lions, and suffered there the dreadful doom which they had plotted that Daniel should suffer.

III

There are many similar examples of the same thing in history outside of the Bible.

Phalaris, the Greek tyrant, who ruled Agrigentum in Sicily for some years about the middle of the sixth century B.C., is held up to infamy for his cruelty. It pleased him greatly when Perilaus of Athens presented him with a brazen bull which Perilaus had invented as an instrument of torture. The victims of the tyrant were shut up in it, and a fire was kindled underneath, which roasted them alive. The shrieks of the poor wretches, conveyed through pipes in the beast's nostrils, represented the bellowing of the bull. It is said that Perilaus was the first victim of his own invention; and that the tyrant Phalaris himself, along with his mother

and some of his friends, were by and by burned in it.

Valens, one of the Roman emperors, when a deputation of eighty pastors went to him to protest respectfully against an act of tyranny which he had done to the Church at Constantinople, answered them by placing them on board a ship, which, after reaching the open sea, was set on fire, with the result that they were burnt alive. But the same Valens was afterwards defeated in battle by the Goths near Adrianople, and was carried bleeding to a neighbouring cottage; his humble retreat was soon surrounded by the enemy, who set the place on fire; and Valens and his attendants perished in the flames.

When George Wishart, the first evangelist of the Scottish Reformation, was suffering the agonies of martyrdom at St. Andrews, Cardinal Beaton and some of his clergy sat at their ease in the front tower of the castle to enjoy the spectacle. Wishart saw the cardinal, and uttered from amidst the flames this remarkable prophecy: "He who from yonder high place beholdeth us with such pride, shall, within a few days, lie in the same as ignominiously as now he is seen proudly to rest himself." Three months later Beaton was assassinated; and his dead body, pierced with bloody wounds, was hung by a sheet over the battlement of the tower from which he had witnessed the execution of Wishart.

In the North Sea, some eleven miles east of Arbroath, lies a dangerous ledge of rocks, nearly two miles in length, on which the Bell Rock Lighthouse now stands. This sunken reef—for only a small part is visible at high water—was long the terror of the sailors who navigated that coast. As far back as five hundred years ago, the Abbot of Arbroath caused a bell to be fixed upon the principal rock, which, being continually moved by the waves, warned seamen of their danger. A notorious pirate,—called by Southey in his ballad on the subject Ralph the Rover,—who had an ill-will to the abbot, one day in calm weather cut the bell from the rock; but was himself afterwards wrecked on the self-same spot.

At the period of the Revolution in France, Dr. Guillotine, a physician of Paris, advised the introduction of the terrible instrument which bears his name, as the means of inflicting capital punishment; and it has often been said that he himself was the first who had his head cut off with it. That is not so, however, for Dr. Guillotine died a natural death in his bed in the year 1814. The same thing has been said of the Regent Morton of Scotland—that he introduced the "maiden," a similar instrument to the guillotine, and was the first to be beheaded with it. But it is doubtful whether it was Morton who introduced the "Maiden"; and it is certain that that machine

was in use in Edinburgh some years before his own execution. Many other such cases have been mentioned; but scarcely one has been found to be true. The popular notion proceeds upon the idea that it is just and fitting that the inventor or introducer of an instrument of death should be "hoist with his own petard." But the man who does this is not necessarily wicked. Dr. Guillotine, for example, was a man of gentle and amiable disposition, and he suggested the use of his machine to make the process of execution as swift and painless as possible.

IV

It is for Almighty God to take vengeance, and not for man. If we ourselves punish those who injure us, we put ourselves in the place which belongs to Him who is angry with all sin, and will be sure to punish it. The Word of God says in all its parts that God will do this. In the Old Testament the wicked man is often warned that "his mischief shall return upon his own head." "It is written, Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord." And in the New Testament we find that the Lord Jesus said, "With what measure ye mete, it shall be measured to you again"; and, "All they that take the sword shall perish with the sword."

But while God will look after the interests of justice, He expects that His people will be ruled,

in all their dealings with their fellow-men, by the law of love. And the only vengeance allowed in the code of love is to kill our enemies with kindness. The Christian law of retaliation is the golden rule, "All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them."

LI

Livingstone's Death and Burial

"And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice."—JOHN x. 16.

ONE of the foreign missions in connection with the United Free Church of Scotland is called the Livingstonia Mission. Its field of work is on the shore and in the region of Lake Nyasa, which is the third in size of the great lakes in Central Africa. The mission is so named in memory of David Livingstone, the great explorer and missionary, who revealed the lake in the year 1858, sailed upon it, and fixed its situation on the map.

When the twentieth century opened, the Livingstonia Mission had seven stations west and north of the lake, manned by missionaries from the home Church, each of them having a number of out-stations; and the Mission commanded a range of five hundred miles in length. In 1907 a new extension took place to the district of Chitambo, some three hundred miles to the west of Lake Nyasa.

Chitambo is in the territory of North-eastern Rhodesia, quite near Lake Bangweolo; and it was there, in the village of Ilala, that the great missionary, who had been far from well during nearly the whole of the closing year of his travels, peacefully breathed his last.

I

April 29th, 1873, was the last day of David Livingstone's journeyings. He was suffering severely from dysentery and malarial poisoning, and he felt that he could proceed no farther. At Ilala his faithful African attendants built a hut for him, and laid him on a rough bed, where he spent the night. Next day he lay quiet and undisturbed. He asked a few confused questions about the country in which he was. On the following morning, at four o'clock, he was found dead, kneeling at his bedside, with his head buried in his hands on the pillow. It was the attitude of prayer, and he had evidently died in the act of prayer. The great traveller had departed on the farthest of all his journeys, and he had had to leave his devoted African attendants behind.

What did Livingstone's black bodyguard do, now that they had lost their master? After earnestly considering what was their duty, they resolved to make every effort to carry his remains, and all his journals and belongings, to the sea-coast near the island of Zanzibar, and have them

sent home in a ship to England. Accordingly, they removed the heart and the softer parts of the body, and buried them in a tin box under a large tree. Then they dried the body for fourteen days in the sun, and preserved it in salt as well as they could. Next they wrapped it in calico, having bent the legs inward at the knees. Then they enclosed it in a large piece of bark from a tree, in the form of a cylinder, and over this they sewed a piece of sail-cloth. Then the package was lashed to a pole, so that it might be carried shoulder-high by two men across the continent to the east coast — a journey of a thousand miles.

Soon the party set out upon their march. It was led by Susi, Chuma, Jacob Wainwright, and others, whom Livingstone had rescued from slavery, and who had received Christian training and baptism from the Rev. Dr. John Wilson at Bombay. The journey was a very serious business; for the health of the party was not good, the country was desolate and difficult, and some of the tribes through which they had to pass were not friendly. At one place they had a regular fight. But in spite of the multitude of trials and dangers these faithful men kept steadfast to their purpose; until at length after nine long weary months they reached the coast, and had the body of "the great master," as they called him, put on board ship. All honour to the

brave and kind hearts who accomplished such a noble work, and at such a huge cost of both labour and risk, simply out of love to the departed, and without any thought of reward! There are not many finer stories than this in the volume of the world's history.

II

David Livingstone's remains were brought to England. Many people would not believe that his body could have been carried all the way from the heart of Africa to the coast, to be shipped to London; so, as soon as it arrived, it was examined by a number of eminent surgeons and medical men. These identified it at once from the arm that had been broken by the lion at Mabotsa nearly thirty years before. A lion had attacked the missionary, seizing him by the left shoulder, had torn the flesh, and crunched the bone into splinters, thereby nearly putting an end to his career. Indeed, it was only by a kind of miracle that his life had been saved. The arm had been imperfectly set, and had given Livingstone trouble now and then during the rest of his life. But now the false joint in it was the mark by which the doctors knew that the human remains brought to London in 1874 were really those of the great explorer.

On April 18th of that year Livingstone was buried in Westminster Abbey amidst the pro-

found grief and reverence and admiration of the British people. The expenses of the funeral were borne by the Government. The black slab in the nave of the Abbey which marks the grave bears an inscription written by Dean Stanley. It closes with these words: "For thirty years his life was spent in an unwearied effort to evangelise the native races, to explore the undiscovered secrets, and abolish the desolating slave-trade of Central Africa, where, with his last words, he wrote: 'All I can say in my solitude is, May Heaven's rich blessing come down on every one—American, English, Turk—who will help to heal this open sore of the world.' 'Other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear My voice.'"

Away in Africa too, on the very spot where Livingstone breathed his last, and where his heart was buried, there now stands a pyramid-shaped block, about twenty-five feet high, crowned with a cross. On the cross is carved "In Memoriam," and on the monument itself is a bronze plate with this inscription in black letters—

ERECTED
BY HIS FRIENDS
TO THE MEMORY OF
DR. DAVID LIVINGSTONE
MISSIONARY AND EXPLORER
HE DIED HERE
MAY 1ST, 1873

There is now no village very near. Chitambo, the son of old Chitambo, who used to live close by when Livingstone was carried into his village in a rude litter, lives away about eight miles to the south-west.

III

This is the district where the new extension of the Livingstonia Mission has taken place. The South African authorities have assigned it to one of the Scottish Churches as a sphere of missionary operations, because of its hallowed memories of David Livingstone, who was himself a Scotsman. Some one remarked, before the last century had quite run its course, that "in the twentieth century Europe will make a world out of Africa." The process has begun. A railway is being laid down which will extend from the Cape in the south to Cairo in the north. The Dark Continent will become less dark. It will be more and more a "fold" for "other sheep" who will come flocking to the call of the Good Shepherd. And all this is chiefly due, under God, to the love of Christ that constrained Livingstone to live and die for Africa.

Mr. Malcolm Moffat, one of the Livingstonia missionaries,—a grandson of Robert Moffat and a nephew of David Livingstone,—was appointed to pioneer the new Chitambo extension. He travelled towards the place by the Cape-to-

Cairo Railway in the spring of 1907, taking his wife and children with him. The party left the railway at a place called Broken Hill, which was then its terminus. Afterwards they, with their company of about seventy carriers, had a long overland journey for a fortnight, through a region which has never been visited by any missionary, before they reached the wattle-and-daub house at Serenje in which Mr. Moffat was to live. Mrs. Moffat was at first the only white woman in the whole Chitambo country, and it was necessary for her to travel for fourteen days before she could at any time have the companionship of a lady of her own colour.

But if it had not been for David Livingstone there would have been to-day no Livingstonia Mission, and no missionary operations within the district where he died. Nor would there have been the noble work which the Established Church of Scotland is carrying on at Blantyre in the Shiré Highlands. Nor would there have been the Cape to-Cairo Railway. As things are, the Christian missionary is often the first traveller who goes to a heathen country; then by and by the trader passes in by the door which the missionary has opened.

Florence Nightingale, the pioneer of modern nursing, and one of the noblest women of the nineteenth century, wrote of Livingstone when he died: "He has opened those countries for

God to enter in. He struck the first blow to abolish a hideous slave-trade. He, like Stephen, was the first martyr.

> "'He climbed the steep ascent of heaven
> Through peril, toil, and pain;
> O God, to us may grace be given
> To follow in his train.'"

LII

Tetzel and his Drum

"Without money, and without price."—Isa. lv. 1.

I

ONLY the true religion uses such words as these. The Gospel of Christ alone proclaims a free salvation. All false religions demand a price for the privileges which they offer. The heathen will bring costly sacrifices to the altar of his idol; or he will torture his body; or he will cause his children to pass through the fire. The Mohammedan has his devout pilgrimages; sometimes his feats of dancing and howling; his meritorious prayers; and his obligation to fight for his faith with the sword. The Pharisee reckons that no one can be very saintly unless he wears a broad phylactery, and fasts twice in the week, and pays tithe of mint, and anise, and cummin.

As for the Romanist, although he calls himself a Christian, his religion is made up of merit and payment from beginning to end, and even after he has departed this life; for the Roman Catholic

Church carries on a constant and huge traffic in the sale of masses for the dead, which are celebrated to shorten the time of the sojourn of the soul in purgatory. In Belgium it is rare for a man of substance, who is a devout Catholic, to die without leaving from £30 to £50 to the Church, to be laid out in the celebration of mass, again and again, for the repose of his soul. The same thing is constantly done by Romanists in Ireland.

Before the thirteenth century faithful Catholics were taught that they could earn the forgiveness of sin by such means as penance, fasting, pilgrimage, and self-torture. But just about that time the Church began to allow money to be put in the room of these performances. The doctrine of indulgences began to be taught. According to that doctrine, the Lord Jesus Christ suffered more than was needed for the salvation of His people; and the Virgin Mary, with many of the saints and martyrs, have done more good works than were necessary for their own salvation. These merits have all been gathered into a common storehouse or treasury, of which the Pope keeps the key. Whoever therefore fears that his own character is not good enough to take him to heaven, may apply at this treasury, and obtain for a sum of money what he needs to make up the amount of merit which he lacks.

In other words, the indulgences system is like

a great spiritual bazaar which the Church has organised, and to which the saints and saintesses have been asked to contribute out of their superfluous good deeds. To the Pope's bazaar we may think of St. Peter giving a sword or two; St. Paul, a few tents; St. Mary Magdalene, some phials of tears; St. Dorcas, a supply of garments for the poor; and so on.

II

The occasion of the Protestant Reformation in the sixteenth century was the protest of Martin Luther against the selling of pardons by the Church for the commission of sin. Luther, although he was a monk, denounced the practice, and declared boldly that God's gift of salvation cannot be purchased with money. The matter came about in this way.

Pope Leo X. sent John Tetzel, a monk, into Germany, in the year 1517, to collect money for the use of the Church. It was given out that the purpose of the gathering of the treasure was to help to pay for a war against the Turks; but the real object was to provide funds for the Pope to spend upon the building of the grand cathedral of St. Peter in Rome, so that it might be a shrine worthy of the great apostle. The money was to be got from the sale by Tetzel of stamped tickets, which set forth that the buyer had received pardon for the commission of those sins which

were named and valued on the ticket. The purchaser bought what the old English poet Chaucer called "pardons come from Rome all hot." Chaucer lived long before the Reformation; yet in these words he does not speak of the "indulgences," as they were called, with anything like respect.

There was a regular tariff, or price list, in connection with the traffic in sin. Those who wished to rob a church were pardoned if they paid nine ducats. Other sins were not so expensive: murder, for example, cost eight ducats; polygamy, six; and witchcraft, two ducats. It was natural that the men and women who bought the indulgences should wish to get good value for their money; therefore wickedness and crime abounded wherever the pardon-seller went.

Tetzel made a progress through Saxony. He travelled in a handsome equipage drawn by three horses, and accompanied by three troopers. When he was about to enter a city he was met outside the gates by the priests, the magistrates, the various trades of the place, and the general population. A procession to the cathedral was formed. In front of it, on a cloth of velvet and gold, was carried the Pope's edict proclaiming the indulgence. Next marched the salesman monk, bearing a tall red cross. After him came all the dignitaries of the city; and in the rear were the mules laden with bales of pardons, to be given, not to those who had

sorrow in their hearts, but to those who had enough money in their hands. The procession moved along amid the beating of drums, the waving of flags, and the pealing of bells.

Arrived within the cathedral, the red cross was set up in front of the altar, and the Pope's banner was displayed; a strong iron box was placed beside it to hold the money that was about to be paid in; and Tetzel went up to the pulpit, preached a sermon extolling the indulgence, and puffed his wares like a quack doctor at a country fair. Although the man was seventy-three years old, he was strong and vigorous. He had a brow of brass and lungs of leather; the voice of a town-crier, and the eloquence of a mountebank. Tetzel shouted all day long about the wonderful powers of the indulgence, and the excellence of the pardon tickets. He said, "The pardon makes those who buy it cleaner than baptism—purer even than Adam was in his state of innocence in Paradise." Again he said, "At the very moment that the money rattles at the bottom of the strong box, the soul escapes from purgatory, and flies up to heaven."

Luther heard of all this, and thought deeply upon the subject. He saw also the effect which the indulgence system was having upon some of the members of his own flock, who bought the pardon tickets, and yet did not leave off their sins. And Luther said at length, "By God's help

I will beat a hole in Tetzel's drum." He also kept his word, as was found when on All Saints' Day he nailed his Ninety-five Theses (that is, propositions) against Indulgences to the door of the Castle Church in Wittenberg. For this act of his set all Germany ablaze, and turned out to be the starting-point of the Protestant Reformation.

III

How different Tetzel's invitations were from those of the Lord's prophet in this passage! Both said, "Come and buy," but Tetzel did not at any time invite him "that had no money." It is the glory of the Gospel that the forgiveness of sins, and all the other blessings of the great salvation, are a free gift. Sinners of mankind must be saved gratuitously, or they will not be saved at all. The gift of God cannot be purchased with money.

It is true that the blessings of the Gospel are invaluable. The heavenly wisdom is so infinitely precious that "it cannot be gotten for gold, neither shall silver be weighed for the price thereof." Gospel blessings are like "waters," for they quench the thirst of the soul. They are like "wine," for they exhilarate and gladden the heart. They are like "milk," for they nourish and strengthen the spiritual life. They are for the thirsty, and the unhappy, and the weakly. But there is nothing to be paid for them—neither coin of the realm nor any other recompense. We are invited to

"buy" these blessings; for we shall obtain salvation under the covenant of grace with as good a title as if we had bought it. "The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord."

LIII

The True Gentleman

"To speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men."—TIT. iii. 2.

I

OTHERWISE, and in one single word, a Christian is to be a gentleman. The word "gentleman" has various meanings. It meant originally a man who is what we call well-born; that is, one who belongs to a good family and is of high social standing. Then it came to mean a man whose education, occupation, or income raises him above menial work, or the necessity of following an ordinary trade.

Now, however, and most happily, the word has come to have a moral meaning. Perhaps the most prominent thought for which it stands to-day is that of a man of politeness and good breeding, as distinguished from a vulgar and clownish person. It means also a man of high courtesy, and honour, and character. Lord Tennyson, the poet laureate, says these words in *In Memoriam* about his college friend, Hallam—

"He bore without abuse
The grand old name of gentleman."

For Arthur Henry Hallam was a gentleman both in the old society sense of the word, and also in his character.

Some people who are high-born are the very opposite of gentlemen, in the best meaning of the name. A prince of the blood may be a churl in spirit. He may be "by blood a king, at heart a clown." The flatterers of King George IV. called him "the first gentleman in Europe"; but that monarch cannot be said to have borne the title "without abuse." If to be a true gentleman one must have an unselfish heart, and lead a moral life, then George IV. was not entitled to the name.

Some time ago I read a good story which illustrates the two different meanings of the word "gentleman." One day two English law-lords met at a dinner-party in London. The one, Lord Westbury, was the son of a very rich man; while the other, Lord St. Leonards, was the son of a poor man. During dinner, Westbury, who had a bad habit of saying bitter things, asked the other judge, "By the bye, St. Leonards, what was your father?" "Well," was the reply, "my father was a barber." "A pity he didn't make you one!" said Westbury.

A few minutes afterwards, Lord St. Leonards turned to the other judge, and asked, "What was

your father, by the bye?" Westbury replied with emphasis, "My father was a *gentleman*." "Ah! a pity he didn't make you one!" said Lord St. Leonards. The churlish lawyer richly deserved this rebuke, did he not?

The word "gent" was at first only a short form of "gentleman." But it has come to have a different meaning. A gent is a sham gentleman, a caricature of one; a person who wishes to pass for a gentleman, but is not such. It is by no means difficult, however, to distinguish between the one and the other. A gentleman dresses neatly and tastefully, but without wearing any clothing which compels attention to itself: a gent overdresses, and is fond of showy clothes and gaudy jewellery. A gentleman speaks courteously to his inferiors, and is kind to his dog: a gent is overbearing to servants, and is not polite even to his own wife and children. A gentleman thinks most about his duties to others: a gent considers only his own rights, and his wishes, and the appearances which he wants to keep up.

Those are wise words which Aristotle, the famous Greek philosopher, wrote more than two thousand years ago: "The magnanimous man will behave with moderation under both good fortune and bad. He will know how to be exalted, and how to be abased. He will neither be delighted with success nor grieved by failure. He will neither shun danger nor seek it, for there are

few things which he cares for. He is reticent, and somewhat slow of speech, but speaks his mind openly and boldly when occasion calls for it. He is apt to admire, for nothing is great to him. He overlooks injuries. He is not given to talk about himself or about others; for he does not care that he himself should be praised, or that other people should be blamed. He does not cry out about trifles, and craves help from none."

II

In the words which he writes to Titus in this verse, Paul the Apostle describes a Christian gentleman. He counsels his deputy in Crete to exhort the members of the Church there "to speak evil of no man, to be no brawlers, but gentle, shewing all meekness unto all men." These words remind us that if a man is a gentleman he will have a clean tongue. He will also be of a peaceable disposition. He will have a heart full of the milk of human kindness. He will study to avoid saying or doing what will unnecessarily hurt other people's feelings.

There are other well-known passages in Holy Scripture which portray the true gentleman. For example, there is in the Old Testament the fifteenth Psalm, where he is described as the man "that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth in his

heart; he that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbour, nor taketh up a reproach against his neighbour," and so on. In the New Testament, again, there is the Apostle Paul's noble hymn in praise of Christian love, in 1 Corinthians xiii.: "Love suffereth long, and is kind; love envieth not; love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil," etc. The man in whose heart and life this grace of love reigns is a Christian gentleman.

All these passages remind us that a gentleman is one who thinks of others before self. To be thoughtful in a kindly way about one's neighbour, and to have the habit of putting oneself in his place, and of trying to look at things from his point of view, that one may act accordingly for his good, is to be a gentleman. In order to be this a person does not need either rank or riches. The humble peasant may be a gentleman. The poor man who has a rich spirit is in every way superior to the rich man who is poor-spirited.

An old English poet called Dekker speaks of the Man Christ Jesus as "the first true Gentleman that ever breathed." And there is no irreverence in that saying, for it is as true as it is bold. How humble-minded Jesus was! How meek in spirit, while brave in thought and action! How perfectly truthful, sincere, and generous! How respectful

to all men! How pitiful to the poor and needy! How forgetful of self! How ready to stoop to the lowest, and to comfort the saddest!

The Man Christ Jesus is our Pattern. God wants the same mind to be in us that was in Him. And His Holy Spirit will make us more and more like Jesus every day, if we ask Him.

LIV

The Jews' Wailing Place

"Thy servants take pleasure in her stones, and favour the dust thereof."—Ps. cii. 14.

I

WITHIN the walls of the city of Jerusalem, as it is at the present time, there are three places of special interest to the tourist. First of all there is the Mosque of Omar, which stands on the site of the Temples of Solomon, Zerubbabel, and Herod. Next, there is the Church of the Holy Sepulchre, which for fifteen hundred years has by many been believed to contain the tomb of Christ, and to have been built over the spot where He was crucified. Thirdly, there is what is called the Jews' Wailing Place; that is, the place where the Jews publicly lament the destruction of their Temple, and implore the Divine pity upon themselves and the race to which they belong. It is about the last of these—the Jews' Wailing Place—that I am now going to say a few words.

There are about forty thousand Jews in Jerusalem, and there are also many more who

make pilgrimages to that city. Within the walls there is the Jewish Quarter, in the south-east part of Jerusalem; and outside the walls there are at least two Jewish colonies, the one on the north, and the other on the south, of the city. The boys and girls know that for many hundreds of years Jerusalem and the Holy Land have been in the hands of the Turks, who are a Mohammedan nation, and do not believe that Jesus is the Son of God. The Sultan, however, tolerates the Jewish worship, and allows the Jews to have their own synagogues and hospices (that is, houses for the entertainment of strangers) in Jerusalem.

It is sad to remember also that the Jews, as a nation, still refuse to believe in Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah. They will not allow that the predictions of their prophets have been fulfilled in the Son of Mary. They "look for another" to come, and to fulfil these prophecies. They accept the whole Law of Moses as still binding. And their hearts are heavy because the site of the Hebrew Temple is in the hands of the infidel, and the sacred hill of Zion is polluted by a worship which they abhor.

II

The Jews are not allowed to enter the sacred enclosure of the Temple Area where the Mosque of Omar stands, but they have a rallying place on the west side of the great wall which surrounds it.

They assemble in large numbers every Friday afternoon at four o'clock, while some of them are also to be found there on Saturday mornings. The Jewish Sabbath begins at six o'clock on Friday evening; and devout Jews, before attending the service in the synagogue that evening, sometimes go to the Wailing Place, as it is called, and worship there.

This rendezvous is a long and narrow paved court, by no means clean, which has for one of its sides a fragment of the huge Temple wall. The great structure is fifty-two yards long and fifty-six feet high. Some of the stones are extremely large, one being sixteen feet in length and another thirteen feet. These stones have a rough panelled surface, and the edges are bevelled (that is, slanted), as such are in all ancient Hebrew masonry. It is believed that these gigantic stones were placed there in the time of King Solomon, and that they are the only remaining portion of the vanished Temple of the Jews.

There are always Jewish people at this spot—Jews who live in Jerusalem, and, more especially, foreign Jews who are visiting the Holy City. Sometimes as many as two or three hundred meet in the Wailing Place on a Friday afternoon—old and young, rich and poor, men and women. Many of the men have a soft and cowed look, as if they were among the weaklings of their race. Some are picturesquely clothed in gabardines—

that is, loose upper garments—of silk or velvet trimmed with fur. Some wear a broad-brimmed hat, and others a fur-trimmed cap. And some have the Pharisees' love-locks—two curls of long hair, each hanging down by itself, one over each temple.

As these poor people have come together for a religious service, they have provided themselves with books to aid their devotions, and these they hold open in their hands. Some have portions of the Hebrew Bible, and others are reading from their Hebrew prayer-books. As many as can find room lean against the weather-beaten wall of the Temple, or touch the huge blocks of stone with their foreheads. They love these stones, embrace them with their hands, and lament and weep and pray with great fervour. They chant passages from the Psalms and from the Book of Lamentations, which bewail the judgments that have come on Zion—the Temple defiled and burned with fire, and Jerusalem laid on heaps. Sometimes they look up with a beseeching expression to the top of the gigantic wall, behind which the Moslem Mosque of Omar stands in its strong beauty, as if they were saying, "How long, O Lord, will the place of Thy sanctuary be trodden down by the Gentiles?"

Not only so, but in the worn chinks between the stones can be seen the heads of many iron nails that have been driven in there. These have

been sent to the sacred wall by sick Jews, who have not been able to come to the Wailing Place themselves, and who expect the Divine healing and blessing as a result of the fixing there of the nails which they have sent. Sometimes also small pieces of paper, which have prayers written on them, are rolled up, and placed in the chinks between the stones. And now and then, with tears streaming down their cheeks, the worshippers chant a pathetic litany, which they accompany with constant bendings of the body backwards and forwards. Here is a specimen of the laments in which they so solemnly unite:—

"For the palace which lies desolate — *We sit in solitude and mourn.*
For the palace that is destroyed—*We sit in solitude and mourn.*
For the walls that are overthrown—*We sit in solitude and mourn.*
For our majesty that is departed—*We sit in solitude and mourn.*
For our great men who lie dead—*We sit in solitude and mourn.*
For the precious stones that are burned—*We sit in solitude and mourn.*
For the priests who have stumbled—*We sit in solitude and mourn.*
For our kings who have despised Him—*We sit in solitude and mourn.*"

III

This "Wailing" of the Jews at the foot of the great wall underneath the Mosque of Omar is a most pathetic sight. There is no pretence about their emotion. Their sorrow is a real sorrow. The mourners stand facing the wall, with their backs to the Gentile onlookers; and not one of

them turns round to see whether his devotions are being observed by the little crowd of sightseers in the background. When we think of the past, the present, and the future of Israel, we cannot but sympathise very deeply with these poor people, and admire their passionate patriotism, even although they are still rejecting the Redeemer whom their fathers crucified. It was because the Jews with cruel hands nailed the Christ to the cross nearly nineteen hundred years ago that God permitted the Romans to come and destroy the Temple.

But what a wonderful people are the children of Abraham! The Israelitish race is the abiding miracle among the nations of mankind. And surely this people, which has had so great a past, and which is being so wonderfully preserved, must have also a future. The Jews live in all lands, but they have found a home in none. They have been bitterly persecuted, but their race cannot be destroyed. And God's Word is full of great promises regarding them. "O that the salvation of Israel were come out of Zion! When God bringeth back the captivity of His people, Jacob shall rejoice, and Israel shall be glad." "For God will save Zion, and will build the cities of Judah; that they may dwell there, and have it in possession."

LV

Jerusalem's Golden Gate

"The gate of the Temple which is called Beautiful."—ACTS iii. 2.

I

JERUSALEM is a walled city. Its present defences were built by the Saracens in the year 1542. The walls are about two and a half miles in circuit, and they are of enormous size. In the line of the walls, round about the city, there are about thirty towers; and the walls are pierced by eight gates. Two of the gates are in the eastern wall, which faces the Valley of Jehoshaphat and the Mount of Olives. The farther north of the two is called St. Stephen's Gate. This entrance leads right into the Mohammedan quarter of the city. Some 250 yards farther south, almost directly opposite the Garden of Gethsemane at the foot of the Mount of Olives, and the Russian Church of the Ascension on the summit, is the famous Golden Gate. This gate, if it were opened, would lead not only into the city, but first of all into the Temple Area—the great

platform, about a quarter of a mile long, on which the Jewish Temple stood. The Golden Gate is therefore not only one of the city gates, but also one of the gateways into the sanctuary.

The gate has an imposing appearance. Its masonry, which is strong and massive, rises in majesty above the level of the city wall. And while the wall is twelve feet or more in thickness, the gateway is still wider; for at least sixty people can stand within it, that is, between its outer and inner portals. It is only the inside portal of the gate—the one that is approached from the Temple Area—that can be opened. There is no road to the gate from the outside, and on that side it is quite closed up with stones well cemented together. There is a good view of the outside of the gate both from the Mount of Olives and from Gethsemane. It stands about 400 feet above the bed of the Kedron, which is the brook that flows, or at one time flowed, through the Valley of Jehoshaphat.

The Golden Gate took the place of the Gate of Susa or Shushan, which was standing on or very near the same spot in the time of Jesus Christ and His apostles. That gate was also called "the King's Gate" (1 Chron. ix. 18), because the King alone entered the Temple by it; it was reserved for his exclusive use. The name Susa was given to it by the rebuilders of the city wall, who had

themselves come from Persia; because they had placed over it a sculptured representation of the city of Susa, in memory of the former connection between Judah and Persia. It led into the Court of the Gentiles, and beyond that into the outer Court of the Women.

II

It was through the Golden Gate, or King's Gate, that Jesus passed on the day of His triumphal entry into Jerusalem. He rode from Bethany in the morning as "the Prince of Peace," upon an ass, attended by His apostles and disciples; and when He came round the shoulder of Olivet, and the city suddenly burst into view, He wept as He thought of its coming doom. The procession would probably wind down through Gethsemane to the bed of the Brook Kedron, and then break up at the foot of Mount Moriah. For those who formed it would not be allowed to enter the Temple courts in travelling attire, or with dusty feet, or riding on animals. Jesus, therefore, would pass through the Golden Gate on foot, and with only a few friends to attend Him.

It may be, too, that, four days afterwards, the Saviour went forth by the Golden Gate to His dreadful agony in the garden. He must at least, when He entered the Temple from Gethsemane,

which was His favourite place of retirement, have often gone in by this gate.

The inner side of this grand entrance in the eastern wall was probably the Beautiful Gate of the Temple spoken of in Acts iii.; although some are of opinion that the gate which was so called stood nearer to the Holy of Holies, being the opening which led from the Court of the Gentiles to the Court of the Women. The Gate Beautiful was of fine Corinthian brass, and so very massive that the labour of twenty men was required to open or close it. It was at this spot that the beggar sat or lay who had been lame from his birth, and who asked for charity from Peter and John one afternoon as they were passing into the Temple. He expected only a small dole of money; but he received a much larger blessing — the immediate and perfect cure of his lameness, wrought in the Name of the glorified Redeemer.

III

The Golden Gate of to-day, upon which the tourist to Jerusalem looks with so much interest, was built of course in New Testament times. Some judge that it belongs to the age of the Emperor Justinian, that is, the sixth century; and others to the time of Saladin, the Sultan of Egypt, in the twelfth century.

The present gateway, like Susa, which stood

there before it, has a double portal, that is, two arched openings side by side. The one used to be called "The Gate of Mercy," and the other "The Gate of Repentance." The Arabic name for the entire structure is "The Eternal Gate."

It has been appropriately said by Dr. James Wells that this famous gateway is a splendid object-lesson, in stone, of the way of life. We enter the Temple of the Holy Catholic Church by the Eternal Gate of God's saving purpose, the two portals of which are "Mercy" and "Repentance." And as we move nearer to the central shrine we pass through the Gate called Beautiful. The outer gate joins together, as the Shorter Catechism does, these two things—"a true sense of our sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ." And the inner Beautiful Gate reminds us that "the beauty of the Lord" is upon His people, when they worship Him "in the beauty of holiness."

I have one more remark to make about the Golden Gate in the eastern wall of Jerusalem. It is this, that the gate is strongly walled up on the outside, and carefully guarded, because of a Mohammedan tradition that some day in the future—on a Friday—a Christian conqueror will enter by this gate, and wrest the city out of the hands of the Turks. The origin of this tradition is probably a passage in the Book of Ezekiel. That prophet, in the course of his great vision of

the future Land, City, and Temple, was brought by the Man with the measuring reed to this Eastern Gate, but only to find that it was closed. "Then said the Lord unto me; This gate shall be shut, it shall not be opened, and no man shall enter in by it; because the Lord, the God of Israel, hath entered in by it, therefore it shall be shut. It is for the prince; the prince, he shall sit in it to eat bread before the Lord; he shall enter by the way of the porch of that gate, and shall go out by the way of the same" (Ezek. xliv. 2, 3).

It is inspiring to the Christian to know that even the Moslems have a presentiment that the time is coming when they shall lose their hold upon the lands of the Bible, which their religion has done so much to desecrate. God speed the time when the great Temple Area, where the House of God stood for so long, shall be crowded with Christian worshippers; and when the Crescent, with all its cruel usurpation, shall be trodden down by the Cross of the Redeemer!

Meanwhile let us rejoice that the Eternal Gate of salvation always stands wide open, as does the Beautiful Gate of holiness farther in. The angels who keep guard there say to all penitent ones, not only "Come," but "Welcome."

> "Thy mercy-gates are open wide
> To them that mourn their sin;
> O shut them not against us, Lord,
> But let us enter in."

God wants you and me to come boldly to the throne of grace, through the Golden Gate, that we may obtain mercy; and through the Beautiful Gate, that we may find grace to help in time of need.

LVI

God is Everywhere

"The Syrians have said, The LORD is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys."—1 KINGS xx. 28.

I

ONE of the early questions in the Shorter Catechism is this, "Are there more Gods than one?" And the answer is, "There is but one only, the living and true God." Every Christian boy and girl knows that. It is a primary truth that there is only one God, and that there cannot possibly be more than one.

But the heathen nations, who have lost the knowledge of the true God, are not satisfied with having only one idol to worship. In their view, as the Apostle Paul has written, "There be gods many, and lords many." When Paul visited Athens, and stood on Mars Hill above the city, he had in full view before him the temples or altars of a hundred different idol gods. A Roman writer has made the remark that in ancient Athens "it was more easy to meet a god than a man"—the city was so crowded with statues of all the

different deities. The Greeks and Romans made idols of the various powers of nature—the sun, the moon, the sky, the winds, the earth, the sea; and they also worshipped the powers or faculties of human nature—justice, truth, wisdom, love, and such like. They made gods, too, of their own departed great men, such as Romulus and Augustus Cæsar.

The same error was shared by the heathen nations that were neighbours to Israel, and who lived round about the Holy Land—the Syrians, the Babylonians, the Ammonites, the Moabites, the Philistines, and others. Each of them had a national or tribal deity of its own, and each believed that there were many different gods in the world.

The Israelites themselves, although they possessed the knowledge of the true God, often fell back into idolatry. They forgot that Jehovah had revealed Himself to Abraham and Moses, and to the Twelve Tribes at Mount Sinai, as the one and only God—not the God of Israel only, but the God who had made the heavens and the earth. Indeed, the entire Old Testament history is simply a record of the long series of relapses of the chosen people into idolatry, and of the successive wars between Jehovah and the idols. Not until their Exile of seventy years in Babylon did the Jews thoroughly master the lesson of the unity of God. Since that sorrowful experience they have

never been found going aside to worship heathen deities. And so the supreme truth taught in the Old Testament is this, that "There is no God but Jehovah"; while the great doctrine of the New is, that "Jesus is His Prophet." "There is one God," say the Hebrew Scriptures; "and one Mediator between God and men," say the Scriptures of the Christian Church.

II

In this chapter we find the Syrians speaking of the God of Israel just as they were accustomed to speak of their own god Baal. They looked upon Jehovah as the God of the little nation of the Twelve Tribes, a people who had come up from Egypt a few hundreds of years before; and they thought that with the God called Jehovah they themselves had nothing to do. King Ben-hadad, or Hadadezer as he is otherwise called, had invaded the kingdom of Israel with a great army, and besieged the city of Samaria; but by a sudden sally Ahab had cut off a large portion of his force, and put the rest to flight, Ben-hadad himself having to flee for his life. And the Syrians put their defeat down to this, that Ahab's army had enjoyed some advantage of situation, owing to the battle having been fought not in the plain, but in the hill country round about Samaria.

Ben-hadad's servants therefore said to him: "We must have regard, in our military plans,

to the fact that Palestine is a hilly country. Jerusalem, Samaria, and most of its chief cities, are built upon hills. When the Hebrews, too, were sojourning in the Arabian Desert, their law was given to them from Mount Sinai. Their great lawgiver and their first priest died, each of them, on the top of a high mountain. Only some six years ago, fire came down out of heaven from their god on Mount Carmel. The Israelites are fond of worshipping on high places; and their Temple is built on a hill. Evidently, therefore, the God of Israel is a god of the hills. So we must be careful to fight our next battle with them in the lowland—in some plain like that in which our own city Damascus lies. On the plain, too, we shall be able to use our chariots, as we could not do among the hills. If we take care to fight our next battle with the Hebrews on level ground, surely we shall be successful."

The Syrians, however, soon found that they had made a great mistake. In about a year Ben-hadad laid siege to Samaria again, and again the Lord gave the victory to Ahab and the Israelites. Ben-hadad's second defeat was much greater than the first. The Syrians lost 100,000 foot soldiers, besides 27,000 who were killed by the falling of a wall upon them at Aphek. They were thus made to understand that the God of Israel was a God both of the hills and valleys.

III

The mistake of King Ben-hadad and his courtiers is often made among ourselves. A great many people, although they would not dare to say it in so many words, get into the habit of thinking that God is in one place and not in another.

The Roman Catholic believes that God dwells in St. Peter's Cathedral at Rome; but that He is not to be met with in the same way within St. Paul's Cathedral in London, for the reason that the Church of England has sinfully broken away from what he calls "the one true and apostolic Church." The English High Churchman, in turn, believes that God resides in the Church of England; but that a Presbyterian congregation is not a Church at all, and that the Lord Jesus Christ has not promised to dwell among those who are not Episcopalians. It is sad when good people forget that it is the presence of the Redeemer with a society of His believing people, and this alone, that constitutes a Church. He says, "Where two or three are gathered together in My Name, there am I in the midst of them."

There are also those who think of God as meeting with them in the place of worship which they attend on the Lord's Day, but who do not realise His presence also in the workshop or the warehouse on the other days of the week. There

are boys and girls who think of God as present in the Sabbath school, but not in the day school.

Some people, when they remove away from home, act as if they felt that they were leaving their God behind them, and departing out of His dominions altogether. Sometimes a young fellow, who always behaved quite decently in the little town where he was brought up, becomes suddenly very wicked when he goes to live in a great city or in a foreign land. Sometimes one who keeps the Sabbath and attends church regularly when he is at home, does not seek out any place of worship when he is from home on holiday. These people act as if their God was only a parochial divinity; and therefore, as soon as they have got out of their own parish, they feel as if they have left Him behind them, and He can have no more to do with them.

Boys and girls, I beseech you to remember that God is everywhere. There is no place that is without His presence. He is beside you when you are in church; but He is also beside you in the school, and in the playground. He is with you here at home; but He will be equally near you wherever you go to spend the summer holidays. He is the God of England; but He is also the God of the Continent. He is the God of the hills, but He is also the God of the plains.

And let us all, both young and old, beware of this ancient Syrian heresy. We cannot possibly

escape either God or duty when we leave our home, and change our address. We ought to do at Rome, not what the Romans do, but what God would have us do. May His grace restrain us from such sin and folly as that of Jonah, who tried to run away to Tarshish to escape from God's presence! That was an expensive and a disastrous excursion, which should be a warning to us all. Rather let us be like the youthful Daniel and his three companions, who when they were carried captive to Babylon determined at whatever cost to refuse to eat the food and to drink the wine, although it came from the king's table, which was forbidden by the Hebrew law. For God is both on the sea and on the land, in Jerusalem and in Babylon, on the hills and in the valleys.

LVII

The Hen and her Chickens

"O Jerusalem, Jerusalem, thou that killest the prophets, and stonest them which are sent unto thee, how often would I have gathered thy children together, even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings, and ye would not!"—MATT. xxiii. 37.

I

ALTHOUGH the Hebrews who settled in the land of Canaan were a nation of crofters or small farmers, the common barn-door poultry with which we are so familiar in this country are not even once mentioned in the Old Testament. Some scholars think it probable that these animals were brought by King Solomon from Persia or India. Domestic fowls are now found everywhere in the Holy Land; but in the New Testament they are only referred to in two places in the Gospels, both of these being connected not with some farmhouse in the country, but with the city of Jerusalem.

We read once in the life of our Lord about a cock, and once about a hen. The *cock* was that which crew on the night of the betrayal, when

Simon Peter denied his Master. It was a real chanticleer, and it seems to have belonged to the house of Caiaphas the High Priest. The *hen* is mentioned in our Lord's words here. And yet the Greek word translated "hen" in this verse does not necessarily mean a barn-door fowl; it means any kind of hen-bird, whether domestic or wild. What Jesus said was, "Even as a bird gathereth her chickens." He referred to the tenderness of any mother-bird for her young, as an illustration of His own brooding love for the citizens of Jerusalem.

Often when the Lord Jesus was a child in the village of Nazareth, which nestled among the hills of Galilee, must He have seen a mother-hen suddenly call out to her brood, bring them in close around her, and spread her wings over them. Very much oftener in Palestine than in our own country has the hen to gather her chickens so; for in that land there are great numbers of hawks, kites, falcons, and other birds of prey. At one moment a hen may be seen in the open meadow, proud and happy to have her little family running about her, chirping in the sunshine. But in the next moment a hawk appears flying overhead, and making ready to pounce down upon the helpless little creatures; or perhaps some other animal is coming softly over the ground towards them. In such a case the mother-bird at once calls her young ones to her, covers them with

her outstretched wings, and shows herself ready to defend them. Although she is a timid enough creature in all other circumstances, she is fiercely brave in behalf of her brood, and is willing to die in their defence. As for them, too, how safe and cosy and at rest do they feel, when they creep under the broad and kindly wings of their mother!

II

Jesus spoke the melting words of this verse about Jerusalem, and to the people of that city. It had been a wicked city during long past ages, and it was no better in His time. Although the Temple of God stood there, the citizens had often given themselves over to idolatry. During the ministry of Jesus the religion of Jerusalem was nothing better than an outward show. He who "was despised and rejected of men" had His bitterest enemies among its citizens. Jerusalem had killed the prophets, and now in three days' time it was going to crucify the Messiah. Very soon, therefore, the cup of its iniquity would be full.

The Lord Jesus foresaw a dreadful doom hovering over the wicked city. He saw it long before the Jews themselves did. He knew that the Roman hawk (or, rather, "eagle") was soon to appear from the end of the earth, and devour the terrified citizens. And He yearned to shelter

and protect the Jews both from the cruelty of man and from the wrath of God. From first to last He showed Himself as anxious to save Jerusalem and the Jews as the mother-bird is to defend her brood.

We learn from the Book of Acts that there were some of the citizens of Jerusalem who did afterwards turn to Christ, and take shelter under His wings. Of the three thousand converts on the Day of Pentecost, surely not all were Jews from distant parts of the Roman Empire; some must have belonged to Jerusalem itself. Also we read afterwards, in connection with the ordination of the seven deacons: "The word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith." But, alas! the mass of the people "would not" take refuge from the dreadful storm that was approaching.

So, by and by, in the year 70 of the Christian era, the Roman armies came, under Titus, and swept Jerusalem away. The siege was begun during the Passover, when the city was crowded with pilgrims. Famine soon began to rage, and at length became so fierce that the people were tempted to eat human flesh. Pestilence followed, and caused the most dreadful havoc. The city was taken after a desperate resistance, the narrow streets being blocked with the corpses of the slain, and the Temple burned up with fire.

Outside the walls the Jews were crucified until wood failed for the making of more crosses. Their young people under seventeen years of age were sold as slaves for ninepence each. The survivors of the siege were sent into captivity, some to toil in the mines of Egypt, and others to fight with wild beasts and gladiators in the amphitheatre.

Thus was Jerusalem punished for its enormous wickedness, and for the blackest of all its sins, the murder of the Redeemer. Josephus, the Jewish historian, says about its citizens at the time of its overthrow: "I cannot forbear declaring my opinion, though to do so fills me with great emotion, that had the Romans delayed to come against those wretches, the city would either have been engulfed by an earthquake, overwhelmed by a flood, or destroyed by fire from heaven; for that generation was far more hugely wicked than those who suffered these calamities."

Christ's pathetic lament over Jerusalem shows us the state of His heart still towards lost sinners of mankind. He knows all about the wrath of God that is coming upon the world of the ungodly, and He is both able and willing to shelter us from it. His heart is sorely grieved when those who have been called by His Gospel to come to Him turn away, and refuse to pay any heed to His offer of salvation. He has placed His own body between His people and every danger:

"Your life is hid with Christ in God." But He deplores that there are so many who refuse to make Him their refuge. He says reproachfully to all such: "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life."

III

John Bunyan, in the Second Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, has a passage about the "Hen and Chickens." Christiana and her party had reached the House of the Interpreter, where they saw much to interest them, and to cause them to think seriously. During their visit the Interpreter brought them "into a room where was a hen with chickens, and bade them observe a while. . . . So they gave heed, and perceived a fourfold method of the hen towards her chickens. 1. She had a common call, and that she hath all the day long. 2. She had a special call, and that she had but sometimes. 3. She had a brooding note. 4. She had an outcry."

Now what does Bunyan mean by these four calls? It is not difficult to answer. The "common call" refers to the universal offer of the Gospel, of which God's Word is full; as, for example "Whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely." The "special call" denotes the influence of the Holy Spirit within the heart, which moves to the acceptance of the general outward call. This is called in the Shorter Catechism "effectual

calling." The "brooding note" refers to the delight which Jesus has in loving and caring for His children. And the "outcry" means the alarm by which, in seasons of danger, they are recalled to His side. We ought, every one of us, to listen to all the four calls; and we must never, on any account, turn a deaf ear to the "outcry."

There is a story that one day when Charles Wesley, the famous hymn-writer, was sitting at his desk beside an open window, a little bird that was pursued by a hawk dashed into the room and took refuge in his breast. The hawk was baffled of his prey, for he did not dare to follow. Charles Wesley thus saved the little bird from death; and soon afterwards he took up his pen and wrote the finest of all his hymns—

> "Jesus, Lover of my soul,
> Let me to Thy bosom fly."

It is a great joy to the Redeemer when sinners take shelter under His feathers. He is waiting to spread His broad pinions over them. Those who pray to Him, in the words of Wesley—

> "Cover my defenceless head
> With the shadow of Thy wing,"

He will receive, and "will in no wise cast out."

LVIII

The Permanence of Love

"Love never faileth."—1 Cor. xiii. 8 (R.V.).

THAT is to say, Love lasts; it does not die. There is much that is delightful and beautiful in the world, but it is a world of change and decay. Although, however, almost all things fade and perish, there is one thing that is real, permanent, and indestructible; and that is Love. The world passes away; and all things, except Love, "come to pass,"—that is, they come only to pass. The reason why Love lasts is that there is something divine about it. "God is Love." Love is what God is, and therefore it "never faileth."

There are two kinds of love which men and women, and boys and girls, may have in their hearts.

I

Natural Love.

Of this, thank God! the world is full. There is, for example, the love which parents have for

their children. A young infant opens his baby eyes upon the loving face of his mother. How beautiful that face is! A mother's love answers to something in the nature of God. It is a bit of God's own life, and therefore it lasts. "Can a woman forget her sucking child, that she should not have compassion on him?" Do you know, boys and girls, why it was that the Prodigal Son whom Christ spoke about ever went home? It was not merely because there was plenty of bread to eat there. It was because, engraven upon his memory, nestling in his heart, there was a picture of his father and mother, and of their love to him. He knew that that love would not fail him. His parents would be sure to forgive him, although he had been a bad boy, and had sorely vexed them and almost broken their hearts.

Even the love of brother and sister is sometimes an extremely strong, as well as a very tender affection. Charles Lamb, the great English essayist, sacrificed all other ties and ambitions to be the guardian of his invalid sister Mary, who would otherwise have been confined for life in a public asylum. He gave up all thoughts of marriage, and was content to be the companion of his sister for nearly forty years, although when her health was at its best she was almost on the brink of madness. At the close of each of her periods of confinement in the Hoxton Asylum, Mary Lamb went home to her brother, who

always joyfully welcomed her, and treated her with all tenderness. "God loves her," he said; "may we two never love each other less!"

There was also a very intimate tie of love between the poet Wordsworth and his sister Dorothy. Her gentle nature helped greatly to open her brother's mind, and to mould his character. He calls her "the sister of his soul," and says of her—

> "She gave me eyes, she gave me ears,
> And humble cares, and delicate fears;
> A heart, the fountain of sweet tears,
> And love and faith and joy."

Sometimes the love of friends, who are not blood-relations at all, is very beautiful. In the Bible annals there is the love of David and Jonathan. In classical story there is the love of Damon and Pythias. In English poetry there is the love of Milton and Edward King, whom the poet calls "Lycidas"; and also that of Alfred Tennyson and Arthur Henry Hallam. In British history there is the love of Bright and Cobden. The deep tender affection of these bosom friends never failed. Nothing could chill it. It was immortal.

And, once more, there is the love between husband and wife — the sweetest, closest, and purest form of natural affection. This is a love of which I need not say more.

"Your heart shall live for ever;" and the strong human love that is in many hearts is immortal.

Yet it is not of natural love that the Apostle Paul is here writing, or rather singing; for this chapter is a prose-poem, a New Testament psalm of love. The apostle's subject is—

II

CHRISTIAN LOVE.

What kind of love is that? It is not the love of instinct, nor the love of gratitude, nor the love of admiration. Christian love is the very love of Christ itself—the love with which He views and cherishes all living things—poured into our hearts, and flowing thence to all around us. Only people who have been born again possess this all-embracing love. It is "shed abroad in our hearts through the Holy Ghost which was given unto us." We drink Christ's blood when we come to Him for life, and when we receive His love into our souls. This love must last—love for our fellow-men, and the desire for their salvation; for the same love burns in the bosom of God.

Mr. Augustine Birrell, one of the statesmen of our time, has told us that one day some years ago, when he was walking along a road in Cornwall, he began to talk to a Cornish miner. "You seem a very temperate people here; how did it come about?" asked Mr. Birrell. The miner reverently took off his cap, and replied in a grave tone of voice, "There came a man amongst us once, and his name was John Wesley." That was all he

said. It is the loving gospel work of Wesley, and of the Methodist revival, still abiding in the hearts of these Cornish people, that has made them the God-fearing folk that they are.

John Williams, the missionary martyr of Erromanga, said that the triumphs of the Gospel in the South Sea Islands were due to Christian love — to the benevolent spirit which the Gospel had produced. "Kindness," he added, "is the key to the human heart, whether it be that of savage or civilised man. When they were treated with kindness, the multitude immediately embraced the truth." And the experience of all the great missionaries has been the same. "Love never faileth."

Christ's people are the people who love. They have loving hearts. They love God, and they love their fellow-men. Love to God and love to our neighbour cannot be kept apart: they always go together. The sum of religion is love to God and man; and the test of it is love to man. Love to the Redeemer shows itself in feeding the hungry, and clothing the naked, and visiting the sorrowful. Every one that loveth is born of God, and those who are born of God never die. Therefore Christian love is indestructible.

Holy George Herbert has a short poem on this subject, which is one of his gems. The title of the poem is *Virtue*, but Herbert uses that word in the sense of Love. In the first verse he speaks

of a beautiful day, and says that that "must die." In the second he speaks of a sweet rose, and tells how that "must die." In the third verse he describes a fine spring season, and laments that it also "must die." In the fourth and last verse the poet rejoices to remember that "only a sweet and virtuous soul" shall live right on in its beauty, and shall never die.

Those also are beautiful lines in which Southey sings of Love, as being both for time and for eternity—

> "They sin who tell us Love can die.
> With life all other passions fly,
> All others are but vanity.
> In heaven Ambition cannot dwell,
> Nor Avarice in the vaults of hell;
> Earthly, these passions of the earth
> They perish where they had their birth.
> But Love is indestructible,
> Its holy flame for ever burneth,
> From heaven it came, to heaven returneth.
> Too oft on earth a troubled guest,
> At times deceived, at times oppressed,
> It here is tried and purified,
> Then hath in heaven its perfect rest:
> It soweth here with toil and care,
> But the harvest-time of Love is there."

LIX

Killed with Kindness

"And he prepared great provision for them: and when they had eaten and drunk, he sent them away, and they went to their master. So the bands of Syria came no more into the land of Israel."—2 KINGS vi. 23.

I

JEHORAM (or Joram) was the ninth king of the Northern Kingdom of the Ten Tribes, and during his reign of twelve years he carried on no fewer than three wars against the Syrians. The first two of these wars were defensive, while the third was offensive. It was the kind action which Jehoram did here, at the suggestion of the Prophet Elisha, to a body of Syrian charioteers and foot-soldiers, that brought the first of the campaigns to an end.

No regular account is given of the war. We are only told of bands of plunderers who made plans to lie in ambush, and thus be ready to spring upon and capture the King of Israel or any one else who might come in their way. These plans were thwarted now and again by information given to Jehoram by Elisha, who was thereby on several

occasions the means of saving the monarch's life.

The failure, over and over again, of his designs led the Syrian king gravely to suspect that there must be a traitor among his own servants. But, when he appealed to them, he learned that it was Elisha the Prophet who was able somehow to find out his military plans, and who made them known to King Jehoram. Naturally, therefore, Ben-hadad, who probably was the king here referred to, became anxious to get hold of Elisha, and hinder him, if possible, from defeating his purposes any more. Learning that the prophet was living in a small town called Dothan, he sent a force of soldiers to seize him.

Elisha, knowing that he was surrounded by a host of guardian angels, went down the hill on which Dothan stood, accompanied by his servant, to the place where the enemy were encamped. As the Syrians drew near, the prophet prayed that they might be smitten with mental blindness; and as soon as his prayer was granted, he led them right away into the city of Samaria, twelve miles from Dothan. This secured the prophet's own safety. Then he prayed that their eyes might be opened again. So, when the mist was lifted from their minds, the Syrian soldiers perceived that they had been caught in a snare. They found themselves at the mercy of Jehoram and the garrison of his fortified capital.

The King of Israel was delighted to have the enemy within his power, and his first impulse was to put all the captive soldiers to death. He was eager to order his troops to fall upon them, and destroy them. But Elisha could not endure the taking of such a dastardly revenge. The men were God's prisoners, not Jehoram's. The king, he said, ought rather to entertain the poor fellows with plenty of good food, and then grant them their liberty.

In Old Testament times there was not much mercy like this; but Jehoram took the prophet's advice. And the result of this kind action was the end of that first war. Ben-hadad's heart was touched, at least for a time, by the generous treatment of his soldiers. Elisha's forbearance "heaped coals of fire upon his head."

II

Let me speak now about a scene in Scottish history which is in a good many respects parallel to that which is described in this verse.

More than three hundred years ago James Melville was the minister of Kilrenny parish, in East Fife, where stands the picturesque town of Anstruther. James Melville was a nephew of the famous Andrew Melville, the great champion, after John Knox, of the Scottish Reformation. The manse which was built for him at Anstruther still stands—a venerable pile, and unique among

the manses of Scotland. It has a quaint turret-stair, called "Melville's Watch-Tower"; and away up above the third storey is the "watch" or study, in which the good man prepared his sermons, and also prayed for his people. This turret chamber looks out to the North Sea, and also commands a view of Anstruther Harbour. Outside of the chamber, in large letters, are the words "Watch-Tower."

James Melville is now best remembered for his *Diary* (or rather, Autobiography), which covers the years from 1556 to 1601, and has been given to the world. It is a racy and interesting narrative, and much has been learned from it about the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, as well as about the manners of the people in these old times. There is a story in the *Diary* which reminds us of the Prophet Elisha's kind treatment of the Syrian soldiers.

It was 1588, the year of the Spanish Armada, the coming of which to British waters created consternation both in England and Scotland. Early one morning James Melville awoke to find one of the magistrates (bailies) of Anstruther at his bedside, with the news that a ship full of Spaniards had arrived in the harbour in much distress. They had put in to Anstruther "not to give mercy, but to ask." "Up I got with diligence," the minister writes; "and, assembling the honest men of the town, came to the Tolbooth; and after

consultation taken to hear them and what answer to make, there presents us a very reverend man of big stature, and grave and stout countenance, grey-haired, and very humble like, who after muckle and very low courtesy, bowing down with his face near the ground, and touching my shoe with his hand, began his harangue in the Spanish tongue, whereof I understood the substance."

This "very reverend man" turned out to be Admiral Don Gomez, "general of twenty hulks" of the Armada. What he said was that Almighty God had shown Himself to be against the great Spanish navy; and that his own flagship had been wrecked on the cliffs of the Fair Isle, which lies midway between Orkney and Shetland. The Admiral himself, with some two hundred and fifty of the men, had scrambled to the rocks, and saved their lives; but they had suffered much from hunger and cold, and were still in a pitiful plight.

James Melville replied, in a kindly way, that as the castaways of the Armada were both friends of the Pope of Rome and enemies of the sister kingdom of England, they could not with reason expect to receive many benefits at the hands of the good folks of Anstruther. "Yet," he added, "ye shall know by experience that we are men, moved by human compassion, and Christians of better religion than you. For whereas our people, resorting among you in peaceable and lawful

affairs of merchandise, were violently taken and cast in prison, their goods and gear confiscated, and their bodies committed to the cruel flaming fire for the cause of religion, ye shall find nothing among us but Christian pity and works of mercy and alms, leaving to God to work in your hearts concerning religion as it pleases Him."

Melville goes on to say that his advice to the Laird and the magistrates of Anstruther "was conform to the Prophet Elisha's advice to the King of Israel in Samaria—'Give them bread and water,' etc." Accordingly, the Laird received Don Gomez and the other officers into his house; while the crew and the soldiers, two hundred and fifty in all, were entertained by the minister and the towns-people during their stay with such provisions as the place could supply.

It is pleasant to read further, in the *Diary*, the sentence which follows: "This Don Gomez showed great kindness to a ship of our town which he found arrested at Cadiz at his home-coming, rode to court for her, made great praise of Scotland to his king, enquired for the Laird of Anstruther, for the minister and his host, and sent home many commendations."

Thus we see how this good Scottish minister took the Word of God for a lamp to his feet, and a light to his path. He followed the chivalrous example of Elisha. He obeyed the precept with

regard to enemies which is set down both in the Old Testament and in the New: "If thine enemy be hungry, give him bread to eat; and if he be thirsty, give him water to drink: for thou shalt heap coals of fire upon his head, and the Lord shall reward thee."

LX

"Cave Canem"

"Beware of the dogs, beware of the evil workers."—PHIL. iii. 2 (R.V.).

VISITORS to the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, near London, get a correct idea of a first-class Roman house when they go to see the Pompeiian Court in the nave of the palace. Worked in mosaic marble on the threshold of such a house was the word of welcome, "*Salve*," that is, "I hope you are well"; while behind the door was a dog, or the picture of one, with the warning words, "*Cave Canem*," that is, "Beware of the dog." When the Apostle Paul wrote this Epistle he was a prisoner at Rome, but he lived in a hired lodging of his own, attached to a soldier by a long light chain; and perhaps when he wrote the words before us he had seen this inscription, "*Cave Canem*," shortly before on the threshold of some dwelling-house, as he and his guardsman were walking in the city.

I

Amongst ourselves, in the Western world, the dog is the friend of man. We admire him for his fine intelligence, and for his warm affection. He is a domestic pet. He delights to go out for a walk with his master, and the boys and girls of the family amuse themselves with him. He is the companion, as well as the humble servant of the household. His master is his god, and his master's will the rule of his conduct. It was the same in ancient Greece, as may be learned from the poetry of Homer. When Ulysses returned home to Ithaca, disguised as a beggar, at the close of his long wanderings, he was recognised by his old dog Argus alone; and almost immediately the faithful Argus died at his feet.

But this kind of dog had scarcely any place in Hebrew life at all. Though the dog is often mentioned in the Bible, it is almost always in a tone of contempt. The dogs of the Jews seem to have been nearly all of one sort—the pariah or ownerless street dogs of the city. The same type of dog abounds to-day in Constantinople, and Damascus, and other Eastern cities. These animals prowl about the streets in troops during the night, eating whatever garbage may come in their way, and thus acting as public scavengers. Being half-wild as well as hungry, they often make the night hideous with their barking and howling. By day

they sprawl with their puppies in the mud or on the pavements of the streets, slumbering at their ease; and they never think of getting out of one's way—the foot-passenger has either to walk round them or step over them. In Constantinople there are many thousands of these masterless dogs. Their home is the street. Their food is the refuse. Each has his own district of the town in which he must live; and any cur that chances to stray into another quarter is certain to be set upon, and if not killed, at least severely bitten, and at once driven away.

Amongst the Jews the street dog was an object of dislike. He was an emblem of all that was filthy, lazy, and contemptible. Not only was the dog an unclean animal according to the Mosaic Law; the name is also a term of reproach, both in the Old and the New Testaments. Violent and wicked men are compared to dogs. One of the Psalmists calls his fierce and cruel enemies by this name. He says they are like the gaunt, half-starved, half-wild dogs which prowl about cities and villages in the East, looking for the offal and carrion on which they feed. Jesus, in the Sermon on the Mount, warns His disciples not to offer the holy things of the Gospel "to the dogs"; that is, to snarling haters of truth and goodness, who will despise the gift and turn against the giver. And in the very last chapter of the Bible it is said of the heavenly city, "Without are dogs"; for no impure

and filthy person will be allowed to enter within the jasper walls.

II

But it is now time to ask, What does the Apostle Paul mean here, in writing to the Church at Philippi, which he had himself planted, and which he loved so much, when he says, "Beware of the dogs"? What kind of dogs does he refer to? He means, of course, human dogs—men whom he goes on to describe as "the evil workers," or bad workmen, men whose work was for evil. These people were Pharisee-Christians, who taught that a heathen man, when he became a disciple of Christ, was bound to obey not Christ's precepts only, but also the whole Law of Moses; that is, he required to become a Jew before he could be a true Christian. Paul here gives to them the very name which they were in the habit of flinging at the heathen. The Jews in the first century called every Gentile a "dog," that is, an outcast, a creature of the gutter; just as in our time, and often without meaning much of an insult, the Turk is in the habit of calling the Christian by that name. The apostle says that it is those who make much of ceremonies, while rejecting the cross of Christ and the simple Gospel, who are the real dogs—filthy, greedy, and shameless. And he warns the office-bearers and members of the Philippian Church to look to them, and to be on their guard against them.

Paul had no quarrel with a Jew who continued to live as a Jew after he had become a Christian. The apostle preferred to some extent to do this himself. But he calls those men "dogs," and not Christians, who taught that a convert from heathenism could not be admitted to the privileges of Christianity unless he kept the Jewish law. This was "another gospel, which is not another," and those who preached it were under the curse of God. Like the "dog" in the Second Part of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, whose barking "made the women and children afraid" when they knocked at the wicket-gate, these men were Satan's property; and they were kept there, close by the entrance to the narrow way, to frighten and deter those who desired to become Christian pilgrims.

III

There are also many other kinds of human "dogs," of whom it is natural to think here.

Some centuries before Christ there arose in Greece a school of philosophers who came to be called "Cynics"—that is, dog-like persons, in scorn of their morose manners and currish tempers. They boasted of their simple lives, and of their contempt for other men who loved knowledge and enjoyed the ordinary comforts of life. But the later Cynics lost their self-control, and sank into mere beggars and brutish men. The name "Cynic" became a warning to beware of them.

The apostle's counsel ought to suggest to us those bad characters of our own time whom it is our duty to avoid. If there is any boy at school whom we know to be bad, we ought by all means to keep out of his way. We should have nothing to do with the backbiter, or the mischief-maker, or the man who has a keen appetite for the faults of the Church and of good men. Many young people are ruined by getting among bad companions. "Live with wolves," says the Spanish proverb, "and you will learn to howl." "He who goes with the lame," says the Latin proverb, "will begin to limp." It is amazing how soon the company of vicious persons will change a young man of pure and wholesome life into an unclean and degraded trifler.

Sometimes we meet with a person who is cross-grained, and has a quarrelsome temper. Let us keep an eye on him too. Charles Lamb says that there are human dogs—"my friend's friend, his partner, his wife, or his children"—to whom the saying, "Love me, love my dog," must not be allowed to apply. In the Book of Proverbs we find this sentence, which leads one to think of the street dog of the East: "He that passeth by, and meddleth with strife belonging not to him, is like one that taketh a dog by the ears." An old minister whom I knew sometimes made short, pithy comments when reading the Scriptures in the pulpit; and on one occasion, after reading this verse, he looked up

from the Book and added the words, "Difficult to hold on, dangerous to let go!" The man or boy who steps into a quarrel that does not concern him may get into trouble with one, or even with both, of the contending parties.

A Christian child, too, must take care not to be himself surly and ill-tempered, and therefore a person of whom sweet-blooded people ought to beware. If you are sometimes tempted to be cross and nasty, ask the gracious Saviour to pardon you, and to give you a new heart, and to cause His Holy Spirit to dwell within you. "Whatsoever things are lovely, think on these things."

LXI

Cock-crowing

"And the cock crew."—MARK xiv. 68.

I

WHAT is it that causes the common cock to crow at the time he usually does? Although cocks sometimes crow irregularly during the night, the first ordinary crowing is after midnight, and then there is another near daybreak. Generally there is also an intermediate effort. The time-marking habits of chanticleer are understood by some men of science to be due to the changes of temperature that occur during the night, and to the amount of dampness that there is in the atmosphere at different hours of the morning. When our Lord lived in Palestine the third of the four watches of the night was called the "cock-crowing," according to the Roman way of reckoning time. That was the interval between midnight and three o'clock in the morning.

In the Bible we read only once about a cock; it is here, in the story of Simon Peter's denial of his

Master. Peter committed this great sin in the courtyard of the High Priest's house, while Jesus was being tried before Joseph Caiaphas. The trial took place during the night,—at least the first part of it,—before an informal meeting of the Sanhedrin. Very early in the morning, while it was yet dark, Jesus was condemned. Now the Lord had warned Peter some hours before this, when He was with the disciples in the upper room, that he would not only forsake Him, but deny that he knew Him at all. The Master's words were, "Even this night, before the cock crow twice, thou shalt deny Me thrice." And it fell out exactly as Jesus had said. How dreadful it was that Peter, the man of rock, the leading apostle of the twelve, should have said that night three times over, "I do not know the Man"!

When, therefore, we think of the cock as one of the Bible animals, we cannot but think of him in connection with Simon Peter. And when at any time painters make pictures, or sculptors make carved work, representing the Denial of Peter, they almost always put a cock somewhere into the picture.

II

Another name for the vane at the top of a spire is a "weathercock." The vane shows the direction in which the wind is blowing; and a vane is also called a weathercock because it is often in the form

of a cock, especially when it is at the top of a church spire. The large tail of the cock has this advantage, that it turns about quite easily with the wind.

Probably the cock is so often placed upon the steeple because of his connection with the story of the Apostle Peter. What is said of the bird in the four Gospels has given him something of a sacred character. It is true that the Lord Jesus Christ used the cock to rebuke Peter for that horrid self-confidence and boastfulness of his, which had caused him to fall so very low. It is also true that amongst ourselves chanticleer is sometimes looked upon as an emblem of pride and vain-glory. With what dignity he struts about in the barn-yard, as if the whole place belonged to himself! And so we speak of a confident man as *cock-sure*, and of an impudent person as *cocky*. An old Latin couplet says, "The cock wears a crown on his head like a king, and his feet are armed with spurs like a soldier." Also the Italian word for cockscomb is "regalia."[1]

But the connection of the weathercock with the Apostle Peter is that of Christian worship, especially preaching and teaching. Peter was a great gospel preacher; yet God used the cock that night to preach to Peter, and to bring him to repentance after his sin and fall. The cock, therefore, was for the time like a Christian minister—a type of the

[1] *National Review*, No. 299, p. 777.

preacher as a faithful monitor of the souls for whom Christ died. It set forth Peter's sin and the shame of it, together with his duty to repent and confess.

Oftentimes a spire is added to a church not only because a spire is beautiful in itself, but also because it reminds those who see it of the chief use of the church buildings. We meet in church for the worship of Almighty God, to lift up our hearts towards heaven, and to give Him who dwells there the glory that is His due. The spire points up to the place to which our worship ascends; and the cock that is set upon the top of it reminds us that we ought to watch and pray. The cock, used as a vane, is an emblem of spiritual vigilance.

III

It is cheery also to think of chanticleer as being the herald of the sunrise. The cock is the bird of morning, as the owl is the bird of night. In the Talmud, which is the code of the Jewish Law, there is a morning prayer which begins with these words: "Blessed be Thou, O God, the Lord of the world, that givest understanding to the cock to distinguish the light from the darkness."

The Lord Jesus Christ is "the Light of the World"—the "Sun of Righteousness" who has arisen "with healing in His wings"; and the folk-lore of the early and middle ages in Christian lands heard in the cock-crowing the proclamation

of the Good News. An old tradition says that on Christmas Eve the cheery crowing begins early, and continues right on till morning, scaring away all evil spirits, and prostrating the powers of darkness. Thus, in *Hamlet*, Shakespeare puts these words into the mouth of Marcellus—

> "Some say, that ever 'gainst that season comes
> Wherein our Saviour's birth is celebrated,
> This bird of dawning singeth all night long."

The cock on the top of the steeple may therefore make this music to our souls: "Arise, shine, for thy light is come; and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee."

LXII

Knowing and Known

"I . . . know My sheep, and am known of Mine."—JOHN x. 14.

HOW delightful is the picture which the Lord Jesus gives us of Himself in this chapter as "the Good Shepherd"! It comes home at once to the heart of every devout reader. It took hold of the mind of the Church in the earliest times; for the most touching figure on the walls of the Catacombs of Rome is that of Christ as the Fair or Beautiful Shepherd. He is represented as in the bloom of youth; sometimes with a lamb on His shoulder, sometimes gazing fondly at the sheep as they feed around Him, or charming them with the notes of His pipe of reeds.

The Good Shepherd cares for the sheep, and lays down His life for them. He leads them into the fold for shelter, and leads them forth from it for pasturage. He is Himself the Door of the sheep; He stands in the narrow opening by which the sheep enter, to guard them safely, and to keep out the robber and the wolf. He gives to His sheep eternal

life, and no one shall be able to pluck them out of His hand. He also says about His beloved flock, for which He has shed His blood, "I know My sheep, and am known of Mine."

I

"I KNOW MY SHEEP."

Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, knows all things, and therefore He knows them that love Him. His acquaintance with the flock is not of yesterday; His foreknowledge of each member of it dates from eternity. "He calleth His own sheep by name, and leadeth them out."

This is more than can be said of most sheep-farmers in our own time. These both buy and sell sheep in the market without taking any interest in the individual members of the flock: as men of business, they have no time for that. What alone they care about is the prices which their sheep and lambs will bring in the cattle mart. And they are not to blame at all for this; it is part of the conditions of our modern life.

Here is a story which I read some time ago. A farmer called John had gone to Edinburgh with his dog, had bought some sheep, and had driven them home. But when John counted the sheep over, he found to his chagrin that two were missing. They could not surely have fallen into the loch by the side of the road; but perhaps they had wandered away on the moor, and were hidden among the

furze bushes. It is possible that the dog was conscious of the misfortune too, and felt that it was a slur upon himself that he had not taken better care of his charge.

After a few days, however, John learned that another farmer in the neighbourhood had two sheep in his possession which did not belong to him; and at once he and his dog went off to see them.

"How were they marked?" asked the farmer. But as John had bought the animals from more than one seller, he had not happened to notice what the different marks were.

"Then," said the farmer, "since you cannot show me which are yours, I shall keep them."

"Not so fast," replied John; "I canna tell the sheep, but very likely my dog can, if ye'll let him try."

The farmer agreed; for he was an honest man, though a little "near" in money matters. The sheep, therefore, were all turned into one field, and John's dog was brought into the midst of them. John knew the cleverness of the dog, and how often he had helped his master in former difficulties. And John was not disappointed now. The dog rushed amongst the sheep, paused for a moment, and then singled out two sheep from the others. The farmer saw clearly that the dog knew what he was doing. He at once gave up the two wanderers, and John and the dog and the sheep went their way home together, John rejoicing over his re-

covered property, and the dog doubtless well content also.

But how different it is with the Good Shepherd! He never has any doubt about His own sheep, whom He has purchased with His precious blood. "The Lord knoweth them that are His." "He says, "I know them, and they follow Me." "He calleth His own sheep by name." What a comforting thought is this, that Jesus remembers us "by name"! He considers our individual needs, and sympathises with us in our personal trials. He speaks to us by name, just as a mother or a sister might do. He never mistakes one person for another. He recognised the penitent woman, who loved Him much, through her tears. He sets His people "as a seal upon His heart, as a seal upon His arm." And He says to His flock, "Behold, I have graven thee upon the palms of My hands."

II

"I AM KNOWN OF MINE."

Or, as it is said in verses 4 and 5, "When he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers."

Some time ago, a gentleman who was travelling in Syria stopped to watch three shepherds who were watering their flocks at a well. All the sheep got

mixed together, and to a stranger they seemed to be one large flock.

Presently, however, one of the shepherds arose from the well-side and called out "Men-ah!" which is the Arabic word for "Follow me." To the surprise of the tourist, about thirty sheep left the others, and followed the man up the hill. Soon another of the shepherds cried out "Men-ah! Men-ah!" and away went the second flock after him.

The traveller was greatly astonished; and seeing the remaining shepherd lift up his crook, and gather a few dates which had fallen from the palm-tree under which he had been resting, he stepped up to him and said, "Would your sheep follow me if I called them?" The man shook his head. "Give me your cloak and crook, and let me try."

The shepherd did so. He even took off his dirty turban, and twisted it round the traveller's head with a grin of amusement. Then he stood and watched him cry "Men-ah! Men-ah!" which the gentleman shouted until he was quite hoarse. But there was no result. The sheep stood lazily blinking at him, and continued to bask in the sunshine; but not one of them moved a step.

"Do they never follow any one but you?" asked the traveller of the shepherd.

"They do not," was the reply; "except when a sheep happens to be sick, and then the silly creature may follow any one."

From this incident of Syrian travel we may all learn the lesson that if any of the flock of the Good Shepherd cannot hear His voice, or distinguish it from the voice of a stranger, it is because that sheep has become sin-sick. It has turned its back upon the fold, and has allowed its ears to be filled with other sounds than the voice of the Shepherd.

O poor backsliding soul! return to your Redeemer to-day. Let your prayer be, "Cause me to hear Thy voice."

> "Was there ever kindest shepherd
> Half so gentle, half so sweet
> As the Saviour who would have us
> Come and gather round His feet?"

Let us therefore refuse to follow any stranger. Let us become familiar with the voice of the Lord Jesus when He speaks to us in His Word, and by His Spirit. May it be our delight to say with the Psalmist, "The Lord is my Shepherd; I shall not want."

LXIII

The Heavenly Rainbow

"And there was a rainbow round about the throne."—REV. iv. 3.

JOHN saw nothing grander in the course of the Revelation than this first view which God gave him of heaven. The door was opened, he looked in, and immediately he saw the throne of God. It was a stormy throne; for a cloud was spread over it, darkness was around it, lightnings flashed from it, thunder rumbled under it, and dreadful voices came from it. Yet those who were nearest the throne were not at all afraid of the storm. It did not disturb the four living creatures who stood at the four corners of the throne. The twenty-four elders sat quietly on their lesser thrones, neither afraid of the lightning nor alarmed by the thunder.

And as John looked, he was not afraid either. He saw what gave him confidence, and restfulness, and joy. Amidst the awful vision of surpassing glory, and in the forefront of the "clouds and darkness" that were round about the dreadful form of the Almighty, John saw a rainbow, fair and calm

and lovely, the emblem of hope, the bright sign of mercy and love. It seems to me that there are four great lessons which we may learn from this bow of God.

I

THIS RAINBOW SAYS THAT WE ARE TO SEE JESUS.

Ezekiel the Prophet once had a vision of the throne-chariot of God, with its high and dreadful wheels; and sitting on the throne was "the likeness as the appearance of a Man above upon it." And Ezekiel says: "As the appearance of the bow that is in the cloud in the day of rain, so was the appearance of the brightness round about. This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord." That is to say, in the rainbow round about the throne we are to see Jesus.

God is Light, but apart from Jesus Christ He is Light so dazzling as to be darkness. The fierce light of the noonday summer sun, if we look the sun straight in the face, will blind us; but how refreshing it is to gaze upon the brilliant arch seen against the rain-cloud, and to feast our eyes upon its seven soft colours! In the same way—

> "The Son of God in radiance beamed
> Too bright for us to scan,
> But we may face the rays that streamed
> From the mild Son of Man.

> There, parted into rainbow hues
> In sweet harmonious strife,
> We see celestial love diffuse
> Its light o'er Jesus' life."

John saw that the dazzling brightness in the throne was "like a jasper and a sardine stone"; that is, it was of a crystal whiteness and a fiery redness—the white representing God's holiness, and the red His justice. But in the rainbow round about the throne there was one colour which shone brighter than the others, and shone through all the others: not the white of purity, or the red of justice, but the pure sweet green of covenant grace. The rainbow was "in sight like unto an emerald." Green is "nature's livery," and to the eye the pleasantest of all the colours to look upon. So, God in Christ is God beautiful, and attractive, and refreshing to the sons of men.

The top of this grand arch is above the throne, but the ends of it bend away down round the throne. The Jews long ago looked upon the rainbow as a great band joining heaven and earth, and binding them together; but Jesus Christ, our Rainbow, really does that. The old Greeks and Romans called the rainbow "Iris," and they made a goddess of it. Iris was decked in robes of a thousand colours, and she was thought of as the messenger of the gods to men. But it is really so with Jesus Christ. He is our Iris. He comes with a welcome message from God to the world. He is

the Ladder which Jacob saw stretching between earth and heaven. The angels come down on the Rainbow; our prayers go up by the Rainbow. Thank God for Jesus Christ: God bearable to look upon, God beautiful, God bending—"the Rainbow round about the throne."

II

THIS RAINBOW SAYS THAT THERE IS MERCY FOR SINNERS.

Every rainbow indeed says so. Always since the time of Noah has the bow in the cloud spoken of mercy. It is the sign of the promise that God will never again destroy the world with a flood. Thousands of years have come and gone since God made this covenant with His people, and He has never forgotten it.

> "For, faithful to the sacred page,
> Heaven still rebuilds its span,
> Nor lets the type grow pale with age
> That first spoke peace to man."

But this rainbow which John saw in vision speaks of something nobler than those which we see in the sky. It is a spiritual bow; and John did not see it "evanishing amid the storm," for it remains always there—"round about the throne."

I have said that the cloud of dazzling brightness on the throne of God is caused by His holiness and justice; and, dark as that cloud seems to the holy angels, it looks still darker to sinful men. The

darkness hides God from them. "The eye of sinful man His glory may not see."

John noticed the forked lightnings glance out of the throne like the flaming sword of God's justice. He heard the thunders rolling beneath the throne like the peals of the crash of doom. His ear caught voices coming from the throne saying words like these: "The soul that sinneth, it shall die"; "I will by no means clear the guilty"; "Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." But when the Seer looked above the throne and round about the throne, he saw the beautiful rainbow, which was all the more lovely because of the blackness behind it; and John read, written upon it in letters of light, that "God is Love." The Saviour has taken the storm out of the cloud. The Divine justice and wrath have no harm in them for those who see the rainbow.

The Bible tells us that the Lord Jesus had very much to do before the rainbow could be hung in the cloud. He had to come into the world wearing our nature. He had to suffer and die for our sins. The dark heavy cloud of man's sin and of God's wrath gathered itself one day on a little hill near Jerusalem called Golgotha. On that day, when the Redeemer bore our sins, the very sun refused to shine, and there was darkness over all the land. But when after His resurrection He went away to heaven, He set the

rainbow round about the throne, and it shall abide there for ever.

God has given us the Bible that we may see the bow of mercy. Every pulpit ought to point to the bow. Every Sabbath School should tell the boys and girls about the bow. This rainbow says that in Christ there is mercy for sinners.

III

THIS RAINBOW SAYS THAT THERE IS COMFORT FOR GOD'S CHILDREN.

The third voice is for those who have accepted the offer of mercy, and have become the Lord's people. For even to those who love God He often seems to spread a cloud over the face of His throne. In our life there are clouds of pain, clouds of trouble, clouds of grief, clouds of death. But God sends these clouds for His people's good; and He puts into them for His people's comfort a reflection of the rainbow that is round about the throne. When I speak about the trials of life I know that the boys and girls will not understand what I say as grown-up people will do. Most young people are full of health and happiness, and are free from care. Naturally they look upon the world as a playground, and upon life as a holiday.

But the older that people grow, the more experience they usually have of trial and pain. And the best of men are often those who are

most encompassed with the clouds and darkness of sorrow.

What a trial to Abraham to be told to kill his only son! What a trial to Job to lose all his wealth and all his children in one day! What a trial to David, the sad death of his son Absalom! What a trial to Paul, his "thorn in the flesh"! But these were all godly men, and they saw the bow in the cloud over the throne. Abraham said, "God is able to raise my son even from the dead." Job said, "What! shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" The Psalmist said, "Though I walk in the midst of trouble, Thou wilt revive me." Paul said, "We are troubled on every side, yet not distressed; cast down, but not destroyed." And these afflicted saints were calm and patient, because they looked up and saw the rainbow round about the throne.

But there are many very young people who have suffered from at least one common form of affliction. There are few households over which the cloud of death has not hung; while some have lost a father, and some a mother. But should not every orphan child see in the cloud the bow of promise bending brightly down? "When my father and my mother forsake me, then the Lord will take me up." Some have buried a kind good brother; but the bow of comfort says, "Thy brother shall rise again." Others are mourning the removal of a dear sweet sister who loved Jesus;

but the rainbow says, "The maid is not dead, but sleepeth." God's bow bent over Christ's great cross; it will bend also over our crosses. And one day He will take away every cross from His people, and give them instead the crown.

IV

THIS RAINBOW SAYS THAT THERE IS HOPE FOR THE WORLD.

In some views of it this world is a very happy place, full of multitudes of good things, and overflowing with joy and gladness. But in other views of it the world is a stormy weary world, full of clouds and darkness, charged everywhere with elements of danger and seeds of death. Although God will never again destroy the earth with a flood, mankind often suffer, both on land and at sea, from the windy storm and tempest. One single blast of hail may ruin a whole harvest.

There is also a war among living creatures, as well as the war of elements. The stronger animals feed upon the weaker.

> "Nature is one with rapine; . . . . .
> The mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow speared by the shrike,
> And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey."

Then again, there are the clouds and storms of war. Think of the cannon's iron tempest, and the bayonet's crimson rain; of the burning villages,

and the groans of dying men, and the weeping widows and fatherless children!

And, once more, there are storms in the social life of the people. There are commotions in business, disputes in trade, treacheries in friendship, tyrannies in domestic life, malice and all uncharitableness between man and man. Indeed, "the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now."

But we know that all this sin and strife shall not be for ever. There is "a rainbow round about the throne." By and by the storms of the elements shall cease. There shall be "a new earth," and "no more sea." The evils shadowed forth by the war among the animals shall be unknown. "The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the kid; and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together; and a little child shall lead them."

In the happy time that is coming, there shall be no wars among the nations. Landseer, the great English painter, has a picture to which he gave the name "Peace." It represents a cannon, old and rusty from want of use, lying on the ground like a derelict, and a little innocent lamb looking quietly into its mouth, as if it were wondering to what purpose such a strange machine could ever have been put.

And the time is coming when men's lives generally shall be more like Christ's life in the

world; when the Bow of His glory shall bend over men, and injustice and fraud and selfishness shall disappear.

"I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell with them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself shall be with them, and be their God."

LXIV

Hadrian's Address to his Soul

"If a man die, shall he live again?"—JOB xiv. 14.

I

ONE of the most distinguished of the old Roman Emperors was Hadrian or Adrian, who reigned from 117 to 138 A.D. Hadrian was a handsome man to look at; his mental gifts were brilliant; he had a ready wit and a powerful memory; he was an accomplished soldier and a devoted huntsman; and he was also an adept in literature and the fine arts. Although he did not neglect the army, he loved peace and not war. His policy was to strengthen the Empire, not to extend it; and with a view to this he actually gave up the occupation of some countries which had been conquered by Trajan, his predecessor. Altogether, Hadrian's twenty years' reign was one of the happiest periods of Roman history.

This Emperor was a great traveller. He felt it to be his duty to try to obtain a personal knowledge of the various peoples whose sovereign he had

become. During more than half of his reign, accordingly, he was absent from Italy. He carried out two very long and laborious tours. These he made chiefly on foot, taking with him a body of architects and artisans. He walked bareheaded, on an average, twenty miles a day, and lived on the hard fare of a common soldier—cheese, lard, and sour wine. In his first tour, having left Rome in the year 119, Hadrian visited Gaul, then Germany, then Britain, next Gaul a second time, then Spain, then North Africa, then Egypt, then Western Asia. Next he visited the islands of the Ægean Sea, then Athens and Greece; and he returned home to Rome by way of Sicily, in the year 126 or 127. The first tour thus extended over seven years. In the year 129 Hadrian set out upon a second journey to the East. He went to Athens, Asia Minor, Syria, Arabia, and Egypt; then back to Syria, and home to Rome, arriving there in 134.

Hadrian was also a great builder. During his travels he planned and began many architectural works. In the year 121 he erected in the north of England the famous rampart, 75 miles in length, from the Tyne to the Solway, which bears his name. Traces of the Wall of Hadrian are to be seen even at the present time. Afterwards he added an entirely new quarter to Athens, which was his favourite city, and completed the temple of Jupiter Olympus there. He founded the city of Adrianople in Turkey. He built for himself his

famous villa at Tivoli, eight miles in circuit, which was a kind of epitome of the world, and has since been a mine of art treasures. He erected the finest of the bridges over the Tiber in Rome, that of St. Angelo; and built a great mausoleum for himself at the end of it, which formed the groundwork of the present Castle of St. Angelo. These were only a few of his building achievements.

II

Hadrian was the author of many works, both in prose and in verse. He loved poetry, and sometimes wrote it; but his poems have not much merit. There are, however, five lines of his which are famous. These are entitled, "The Dying Hadrian to his Soul," and they are most pathetic—

> "Animula, vagula, blandula,
> Hospes, comesque corporis,
> Quæ nunc abibis in loca,
> Pallidula, rigida, nudula?
> Nec, ut soles, dabis jocos."

The Emperor had enjoyed his strenuous career, and the use of all his brilliant talents; but now his life is nearly over. His soul is about to pass away, and he has no idea where it is going. For though this great Cæsar lived a hundred years after Christ, he did not know Him as the Saviour, and as the Revealer of life and immortality.

Hadrian's famous lines are an imperishable memorial of the only man of genius among the

Emperors of Rome. They have been translated by many scholars, and by some of our English poets. Here is the beautiful translation, or rather paraphrase, of Matthew Prior—

> "Poor little, pretty, fluttering thing,
> Must we no longer live together?
> And dost thou prune thy trembling wing
> To take thy flight, thou know'st not whither?
>
> Thy humorous vein, thy pleasing folly
> Lies all neglected, all forgot!
> And pensive, wavering, melancholy,
> Thou dread'st and hop'st, thou know'st not what!"

Yes, that is so! Death, to an ancient heathen, and to a modern infidel such as Hobbes, the Malmesbury philosopher, is like "taking a leap in the dark." Socrates, the wisest and best of the Greeks, said to the judges who condemned him, "And now, O judges, ye are going hence to live; and I am going hence to die: which of these is best, the gods know; but, I suppose, no man does." To the same effect spoke an aged counsellor of King Edwin of Deira, in the seventh Christian century, on an occasion when the wise men of Northumbria were assembled to consider whether they would accept the new religion of Jesus Christ: "So seems the life of man, O king, as a sparrow's flight through the hall when you are sitting at meat in winter-tide, with the warm fire lighted on the hearth, but the icy rain-storm without. The sparrow flies in at one door, and tarries for a moment in the light and

heat of the hearth fire, and then flying forth from the other vanishes into the wintry darkness whence it came. So tarries for a moment the life of man in our sight; but what is before it, what after it, we know not. If this new teaching tells us aught certainly of these, let us follow it."

III

How very different from all this uncertainty are the thoughts and hopes of the believer in Christ! What a contrast there is between the dying words of the Emperor Hadrian and those on the same subject which were so often on the lips of Paul of Tarsus! The Apostle Paul, like Hadrian, had been for the best twenty years of his life a most laborious traveller and builder. His object, however, was not to set up fortresses, and cities, and aqueducts, and temples, and an empire of this world; but to build *men* after the pattern of Jesus Christ, and to build up the Church of his Divine Master.

And what did Paul say about the future after death, when he saw that he was coming near the end of his almost superhuman labours? He did not write words like Hadrian's "*Animula, vagula*"—"O little soul of mine, that art hastening away, to what regions art thou about to go?" His words were such as these: "To me to live is Christ, and to die is gain." "I have a desire to

depart, and to be with Christ, which is far better." "I am willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be at home with the Lord." "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love His appearing."

Nor was Paul the Apostle alone in this hope. All Christ's people have it. John, another of the apostles, says, "We know that, when He shall appear, we shall be like Him; for we shall see Him as He is." John Bunyan, in describing the entrance of Christian and Hopeful into the Golden City, writes these words: "Now, just as the gates were opened to let in the men, I looked in after them, and behold, the City shone like the sun; the streets also were paved with gold; and in them walked many men with crowns on their heads, palms in their hands, and golden harps, to sing praises withal. . . . And after that they shut up the gates; which when I had seen, I wished myself among them."

The same Christian faith underlies the words of Charles Lamb in reference to his departed friend Hester, "Shall we not meet, as heretofore, some summer morning?" and also the lines which Tennyson wrote near the close of his long life, "I hope to see my Pilot face to face, when I have

crost the bar." Similarly, Robert Browning, in his latest poem, desires that his friends should think of him as still active in the unseen world, and should "greet" his spirit "with a cheer."

But perhaps the finest direct contrast to "Hadrian's Dying Address to his Soul" is to be found in the lines of an English poetess, Mrs. Anna Letitia Barbauld, in her poem *Life*, which was inspired by that of the brilliant Roman Emperor, but is as hopeful as his is sad. They are the only lines of any other poet which William Wordsworth said he would like to have written himself—

> "Life! we've been long together,
> Through pleasant and through cloudy weather;
> 'Tis hard to part when friends are dear;
> Perhaps 'twill cost a sigh, a tear;
> Then steal away, give little warning,
> Choose thine own time;
> Say not 'Good-night,' but in some brighter clime
> Bid me 'Good-morning.'"

LXV

"Carried away by the Angels"

"He was carried away by the angels into Abraham's bosom."—LUKE xvi. 22 (R.V.).

MOST of the heathen races have some idea of religion and a future life. Scarcely any of them have believed that the soul dies along with the body. The Red Indian of North America expects to make his way after death to the happy land—the happy hunting ground of the setting sun, where he will again follow the war-path. The ancient British chief, when he died, was buried in the hope of another and a better life. His weapons of the chase and of war were laid in the grave beside him, and sometimes also his favourite horse or dog. Now and then his clay drinking-cup, and a clay bowl containing food, were put into his coffin for his use on his long journey. Herodotus tells us that when a Scythian chief died, one of his wives was strangled and laid beside him; while his cupbearer, his charioteer, and his horses, were killed and placed in the tomb, together with all things needful for his comfort in the other world.

I

The ancient Greeks and Romans believed that the abode of the dead, which they called Hades,—that is, the unseen world,—was away deep down under the earth; and that it was surrounded by a number of rivers, which the shades of the dead had to be carried across. Cocytus rolled salt and icy waves composed of tears. Phlegethon was a river of fire. Acheron was a black, deep, and swiftly flowing stream. And there were also the sacred Styx, and the blessed Lethe.

On these rivers of the underworld there was a leaky and worm-eaten boat, which was under the charge of a dirty ferryman called Charon—an old fellow with hoary hair, and a rough beard, and wretched clothing. It was Charon's duty to ferry all the buried dead across the rivers of Hades. For this service the old man charged each of the shades a small coin, called an obolus, which was worth rather more than three halfpence. The coin was always placed under the tongue, in the mouth of the dead body, previous to its burial, "to pay the Stygian ferry." Those who could not produce the required obolus were obliged to wait for a hundred years, after which Charon ferried them over free of charge.

All the Greeks and Romans of later times, who were attached to the religion of their country, knew about the grim old ferryman and his dimly

gleaming bark which sailed on Acheron and Styx. The famous city of Antioch, which was the capital of Syria two thousand years ago, is overlooked by a huge crag which one of the kings (Antiochus Epiphanes) caused to be hewn into one vast statue of Charon. Syria had suffered severely from a dreadful pestilence; and it was to appease the anger of the gods that the "Charonium," as it was called, was carved upon the face of the cliff. The big grim face of the gloomy boatman stared right over the market-place of Antioch. What a curious work of art that was!

And Charon's form appears in other and finer works of art. Dante, the great poet of Italy, and the first Christian poet, brings Charon and his wherry into his poem about Hell. In vision he saw through the dim air a great crowd of naked souls upon the bank of the rapidly rolling Acheron; and he also saw Charon, a demon with eyes of burning coal, rowing his boat towards them. As soon as the craft touched the bank, the old man brandished his oar, gathered the spirits together, and took them on board, beating with his oar those who lagged behind. The old Roman poet, Virgil, describes the same scene in the *Æneid*—

> "The shivering army stands,
> And press for passage with extended hands.
> Now these, now those, the surly boatman bore;
> The rest he drove to distance from the shore."

We see old Charon similarly in Michael Angelo's picture of the Last Judgment, one of the most famous of paintings, which is upon the wall of the Sistine Chapel in Rome. The ferryman and his boat appear at the bottom of the picture. The painter has given him blazing eyes, long ears, and taloned feet; and he represents him as, with oar upraised, beating the crowd of shades out of the boat. The whole picture is in keeping with this; so much so, that it has been called "a horrible nightmare in colour." We know that God will not deal with the lost so. He has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. Christ says to them, "Ye will not come to Me, that ye might have life." But even He, though He is infinitely gentle and loving, cannot help it that each human being, when he dies, should "go to his own place."

II

It is pleasant to turn from the thought of Charon, and his place among the myths of Greece and Rome, to the angels of God who are spoken of by the Great Teacher in this parable. Jesus tells us that the angels carried away the beggar Lazarus, when he died, "into Abraham's bosom."

Of course these words are a figure of speech. But the figure is full of meaning. It calls up within our minds the thought of a feast, and a feast partaken of in the very best of company. The Jews, when at table, did not sit on chairs, as

we do. They used very low and broad couches, upon which they stretched themselves at full length. Each couch held three persons, and the second person lay with the back part of his head towards the breast of the first; that is, he lay in his neighbour's bosom. Now the Lord Jesus says here that Lazarus, who had been tossed carelessly aside, and had eaten of the crumbs, with only dogs for his company, was set down by the angels at the banquet-table of heaven, where he leaned on the breast of Abraham, the Friend of God. Among the Jews, to lie in Abraham's bosom was to be in the most blessed part of Paradise: it was to dwell "under the throne of glory."

Is it not sweet to think of Jesus Christ our Redeemer employing the blessed angels to bear the souls of His people, when they leave their mortal bodies, home to Himself within His Father's house?

> "Oh, not in cruelty, not in wrath,
> The Reaper came that day;
> 'Twas an Angel visited the green earth,
> And took the flowers away."

When Christian and Hopeful, near the end of Part First of *The Pilgrim's Progress*, reached the close of the pilgrimage, and were not far from the bridgeless river, "there met them two men in raiment that shone like gold, also their faces shone as the light." And when they came up

out of the river, "upon the bank, on the other side, they saw the two shining men again, who there waited for them. Wherefore being come out of the river, they saluted them, saying, 'We are ministering spirits, sent forth to minister for them who shall be heirs of salvation.' Thus they went along towards the gate. . . . And the talk that they had with the shining ones was about the glory of the place. . . . And lo! as they entered, they were transfigured; and they had raiment put on that shone like gold. There were also that met them with harps and crowns, and gave them to them; the harps to praise withal, and the crowns in token of honour."

Similarly, near the end of Part Second we read: "Now the day drew on that Christiana must be gone. So the road was full of people to see her take her journey. But, behold, all the banks beyond the river were full of horses and chariots, which were come down from above, to accompany her to the City gate. So she came forth, and entered the river, with a beckon of farewell to those that followed her. . . . And her children and friends returned to their place, for those that waited for Christiana had carried her out of their sight. So she went and called, and entered in at the gate."

LXVI

Judgment Books

"And books were opened."—REV. xx. 12 (R.V.).

WHAT a solemn picture we have here of the Last Judgment! There is the great white throne. There is the face of the Judge, so beautiful and yet so awful. There is the assembled universe of the risen dead, brought before the throne to be judged. And there is the opening of the Books of Judgment.

"Books were opened," writes the Seer. And he adds, "The dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works." The books are the various rolls and records by which every one shall be either acquitted or condemned by the Judge.

I want to tell you what some of these books are, which shall be opened at the Lord's Coming, when all men stand before His judgment-seat.

I

THERE IS THE BOOK OF GOD'S REMEMBRANCE.

This Book is spoken of by the Prophet Malachi. "A Book of remembrance was written before Him,

for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name. And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in the day that I do make, even a peculiar treasure; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him."

What a memory Almighty God has! (Strictly speaking, He has not really a memory, any more than He has hands or feet; but we can only speak of Him at all by thinking of Him as having a nature like our own.) How perfect is His knowledge! He knows everything about everybody, and forgets nothing about anybody. He numbers the hairs of our head. In His Book all our members are written. God is an ever-present Eye, which sees every one and everything perfectly. And so the Psalmist says: "O Lord, Thou hast searched me, and known me. Thou knowest my downsitting and mine uprising, Thou understandest my thought afar off." And David says in another psalm that God treasures His servant's tears in His "bottle," and that they are counted up in His "Book."

It would not be possible for God to judge the world in righteousness if He had not this "Book of remembrance." The Judge must know perfectly all my actions, and thoughts, and feelings, before He can judge me. But "the eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." "Neither is there any creature that is not manifest in His sight; but all things are naked and opened

unto the eyes of Him with whom we have to do." And so the *Dies Irae*, the great Latin hymn on the Last Judgment, contains this verse—

> "Lo! the Book, exactly worded,
> Wherein all hath been recorded,
> Thence shall judgment be awarded."

II

THERE IS THE BOOK OF OUR OWN LIVES.

At the Great Day not only will the Book of God's memory be opened; the book of our own memory will be opened also.

Your life and mine, boys and girls, is a book that we are writing. It is an *autobiography*—that is, a life of ourselves written by ourselves. Every day supplies a page or a leaf for the book; and there are also monthly parts and yearly volumes. The book will be completed when we die. Death will write *Finis* or "The end" upon the last page. This book is a narrative of all our deeds and words and thoughts—good, bad, and indifferent.

Now, ought not you and I to write the book of our own lives as well as ever we can? It should be the deep desire of our hearts to set down upon the pages a clean record. There will, no doubt, be many blots and failures. And yet it is possible for us to make the history of our own life really a good book. It will be so if, day by day to the end of our course, we trust Jesus Christ as our Saviour; and if we make it our rule to follow

and imitate Him, and the people who are like Him.

The book of our life will be opened on the Day of Judgment. The Judge will call for it, and we shall have to produce it. Every word that is in it shall be read out; and we shall be judged by what is written in it. It may even be said that one's own memory is this judgment book, and that the face of the Judge shall open it. Conscience is the keeper of the records—the Master of the Rolls of the soul; and in the presence of the Judge our whole earthly life shall flash before us, in one moment of vivid remembrance, at the first glance of His face. Even the resurrection body shall be a book, a record of character. The swinish nature shall awake with the swine-body; and those who fell asleep in Jesus shall be raised in glory.

III

THERE IS THE BOOK OF GOD'S WORD.

Jesus Christ said one day, when near the end of His ministry, in summing up all that He had taught, "He that rejecteth Me, and receiveth not My words, hath one that judgeth him: the word that I have spoken, the same shall judge him in the last day." But where are we to discover the Redeemer's message to our souls? We have it in the sacred Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments.

In the first half of the Bible we find the *Law*. The Law was given to the Hebrews at Mount Sinai. It is "a fiery law." Jehovah spoke it during a thunderstorm; and the Ten Commandments sometimes fall on our ears yet like ten dreadful thunderpeals. They sound so loud, within the awakened soul, as to deafen it. "Cursed is everyone that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them."

In the second half of the Bible we find the *Gospel* of our Lord Jesus Christ. The gospel comes not from the gloomy, black Mount Sinai, but from the sunny hill of Zion. It tells us that "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us." It assures us that "there is therefore now no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus"; and that "the blood of Jesus Christ, God's Son, cleanseth us from all sin."

George Herbert, the Christian poet, has said in his poem *Judgment* that when the Almighty on the Great Day shall ask him to produce the book of his own life—that is, his autobiography—he will put into the hand of the Judge, rather, a copy of the New Testament, to remind Him of His own gracious promises to the penitent.

> "But I resolve, when Thou shalt call for mine,
> That to decline,
> And thrust a Testament into Thy hand!
> Let *that* be scanned:
> There Thou shalt find my faults are Thine."

Certainly the Word of God is one of the books that will be opened.

IV

THERE IS THE BOOK OF LIFE.

This book, called also "the Lamb's Book of Life," is spoken of here, in a clause by itself, as "another book." These are "books"; this is "the Book." The Book of Life bears independent testimony to the fact that any particular person is among the saved. It is a book of names—a register of the first-born, who are written in heaven. It contains nothing but the names of the blessed, of those that shall be heirs of eternal life. Other judgment books may refer to the lives of good and bad alike; but this has in it only the names of the saved. It is not a book of life and death. The Bible mentions no book of death. There is only the Book of Life.

The other books to be opened are, as it were, vouchers for what this Book says. From its pages alone the awards to the good and the wicked shall at the last be made. Only those are to be admitted into the New Jerusalem whose names have been written in the Lamb's Book of Life; and every one whose name is not found written therein is to be cast into the lake of fire. The Book is a family register of the sons of God, and of the brothers of the Lord Jesus Christ. It is a list of the human beings who are His property—those whom

the Lamb has bought with His own precious blood.

The Book of Life is the oldest of the Books of Judgment. It is the most venerable of all rolls and records. It is "the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world." The names that are in it were written from the first of time; they are the names of those who belong to the flock of the Good Shepherd. And He says to-day: "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand."

THE END

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INDEX OF TEXTS

	PAGE
Gen. xviii. 11	27
Gen. xxi. 17	175
Gen. xxii. 7	148
Gen. xxvii. 23	32
Gen. xxix. 20	13
Ex. ii. 9	1
Ex. ii. 12	213
Ex. xxiii. 30	299
Num. x. 1, 2	98
Josh. xi. 18	17
1 Sam. ii. 18, 19	7
1 Kings iii. 28	22
1 Kings xx. 28	353
1 Kings xx. 32	70
2 Kings vi. 23	373
2 Chron. xxxii. 33	261
Job ii. 2	225
Job xiv. 14	408
Job xvii. 9	51
Ps. vii. 15, 16	311
Ps. xxiii. 1	37
Ps. xxiv. 3–5	186
Ps. lxxxiv. 10	246
Ps. cii. 14	340
Prov. xxiii. 34	272
Eccles. x. 20	239
Isa. xi. 13	200
Isa. lv. 1	327
Jer. v. 1	130
Jer. xxxvi. 26	161
Jer. xliii. 13	142
Hag. ii. 9	285
Matt. iv. 5	83
Matt. viii. 17	266
Matt. xxiii. 5	291
Matt. xxiii. 37	360
Matt. xxiii. 38	110
Matt. xxiv. 28	104
Matt. xxiv. 35	77
Matt. xxvii. 29	304
Mark vi. 3	44
Mark viii. 35	277
Mark xiv. 68	387
Luke ii. 7	192
Luke xii. 6	64
Luke xvi. 22	415
Luke xix. 17	246
John x. 14	392
John x. 16	319
Acts iii. 2	346
Acts xii. 7	116
Acts xii. 15	123
Acts xx. 35	168
1 Cor. xiii. 8	367
Phil. ii. 9	57
Phil. iii. 2	380
Col. i. 15	136
1 Tim. ii. 5	231
Tit. iii. 1	92
Tit. iii. 2	334
1 John ii. 1, 2	207
Rev. i. 9	180
Rev. iii. 1	155
Rev. iv. 3	398
Rev. xii. 3	219
Rev. xx. 12	421
Rev. xxi. 6	254

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